

Domestic Girlfriend



17

K E I S A S U G A

D O M E X G I R L

Domestic Girlfriend

17

D O M E
G I R L

KEI SASUGA

D O M E
G I R L

17

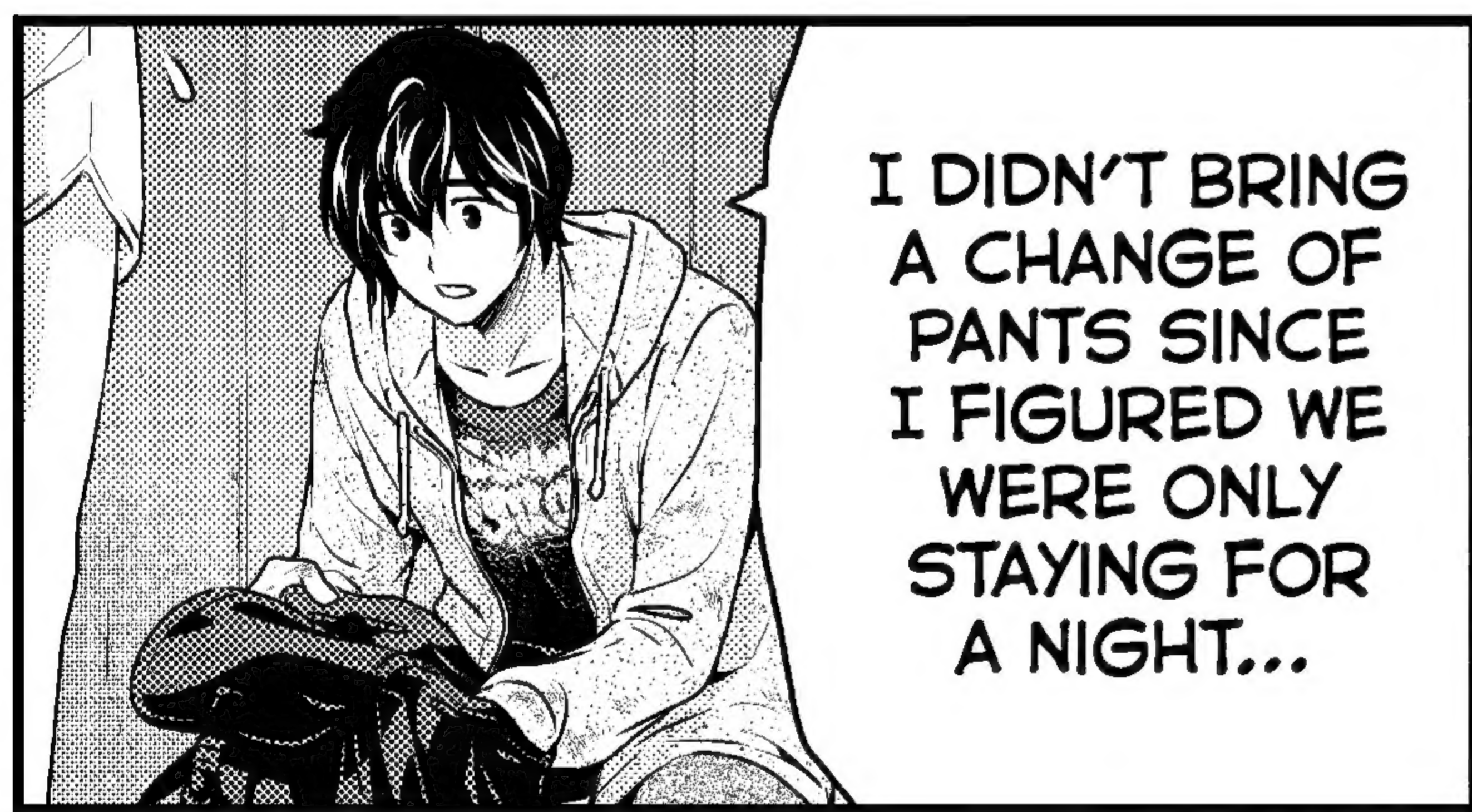
CONTENTS

CH. 155	A NEW FORM OF LOVE	3
CH. 156	SISTERLY SCHISM	22
CH. 157	FEELINGS SET IN MOTION	41
CH. 158	WHEN LIFE DOESN'T GO YOUR WAY	59
CH. 159	EVER-CHANGING NORMALCY	77
CH. 160	COMFORT TO THE TROUBLED	95
CH. 161	THE DEFINITION OF HAPPINESS	113
CH. 162	LOOKING BEYOND	131
CH. 163	TO A NEW SELF	149
CH. 164	WOES OF YOUTH	167
EXTRA	CLOSE SIBLINGS, MAO & LEO	185



CHAPTER 155:
A NEW FORM OF LOVE







IT'S COOL. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

S-SORRY. I'LL GET THEM BACK TO YOU AFTER I WASH THEM.



I... I KNOW.

JUST THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE!

ER...I DIDN'T MEAN NOT TO WORRY ABOUT WASHING THEM!



MAN, THIS IS REALLY THROWING ME OFF.



...HOW CAN I BE EXPECTED...

...KEEP MY COOL AROUND HER?

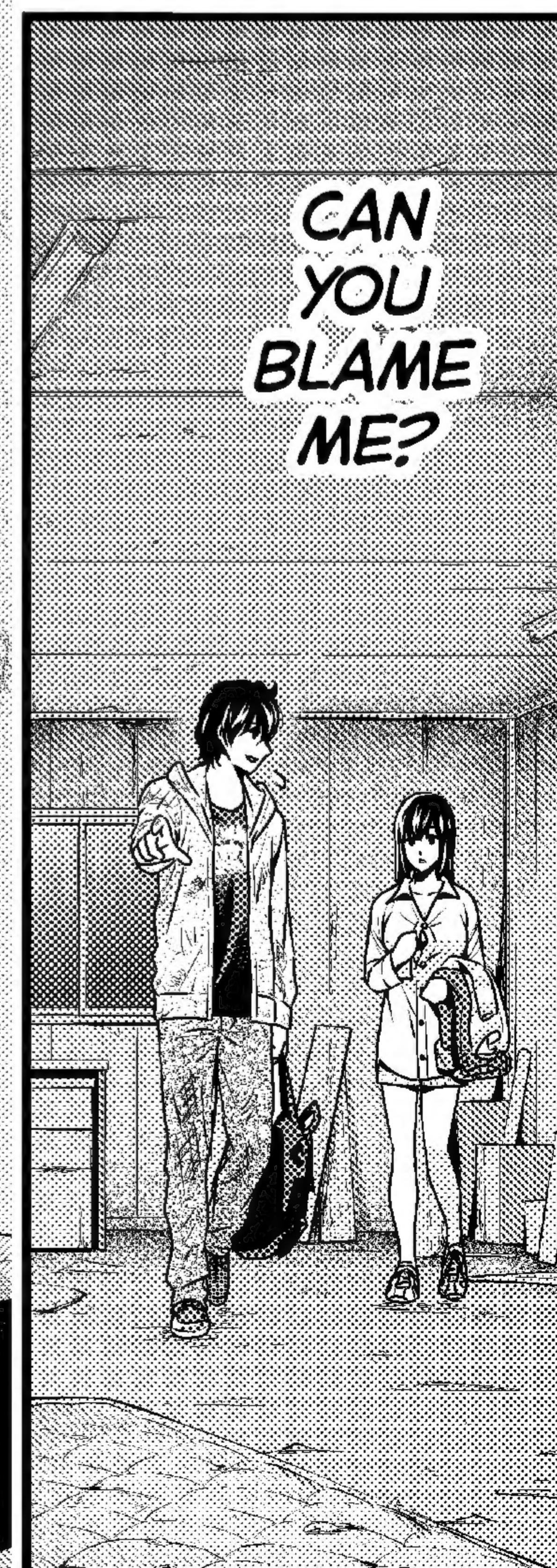
B-
BY THE WAY ...



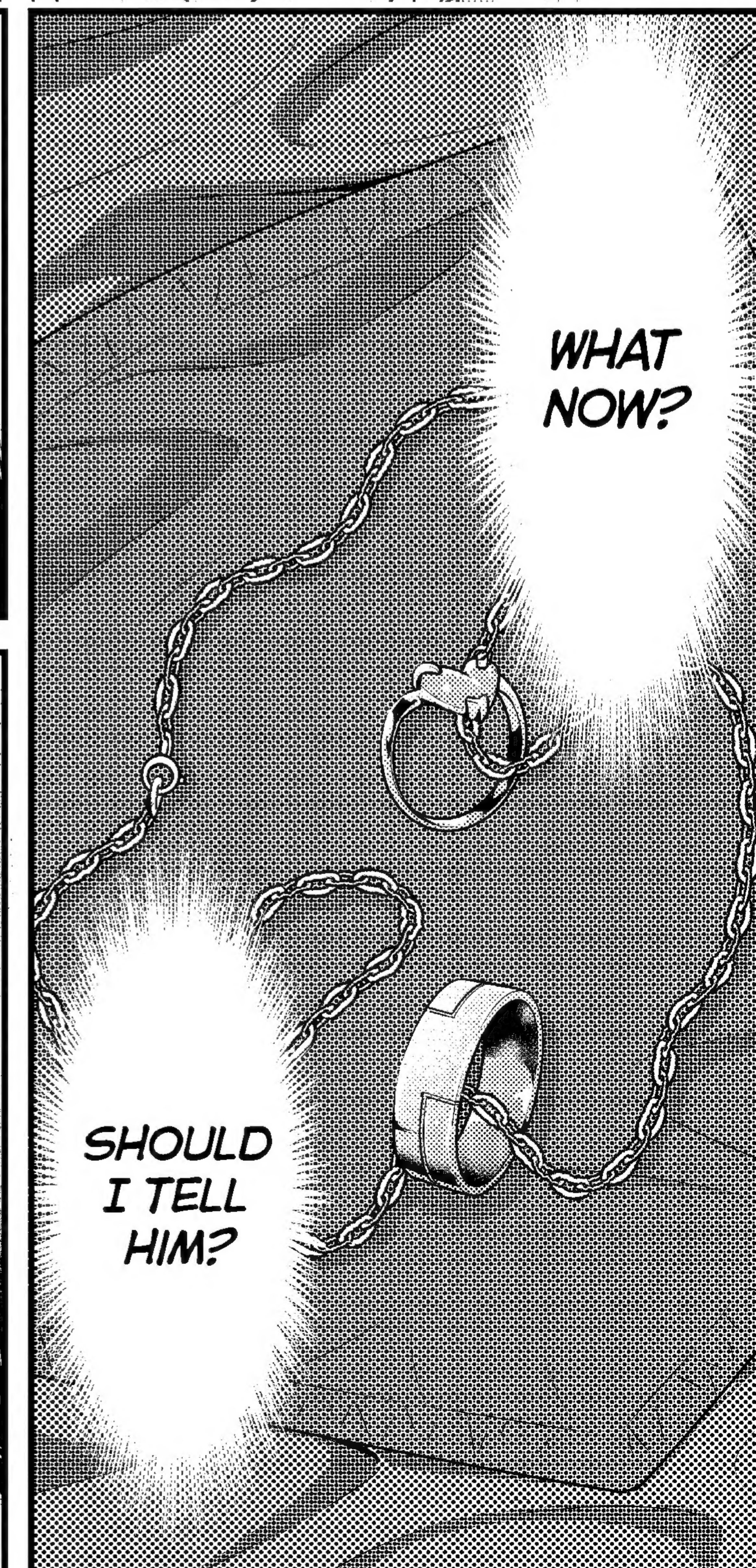
THE WOMAN I ONCE PROMISED TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE WITH.

SHE'S BOTH MY OLDER SISTER AND MY EX.

AND IF SHE REALLY MEANT WHAT SHE SAID BACK THEN, WHEN SHE WAS DRUNK AT MY PLACE...



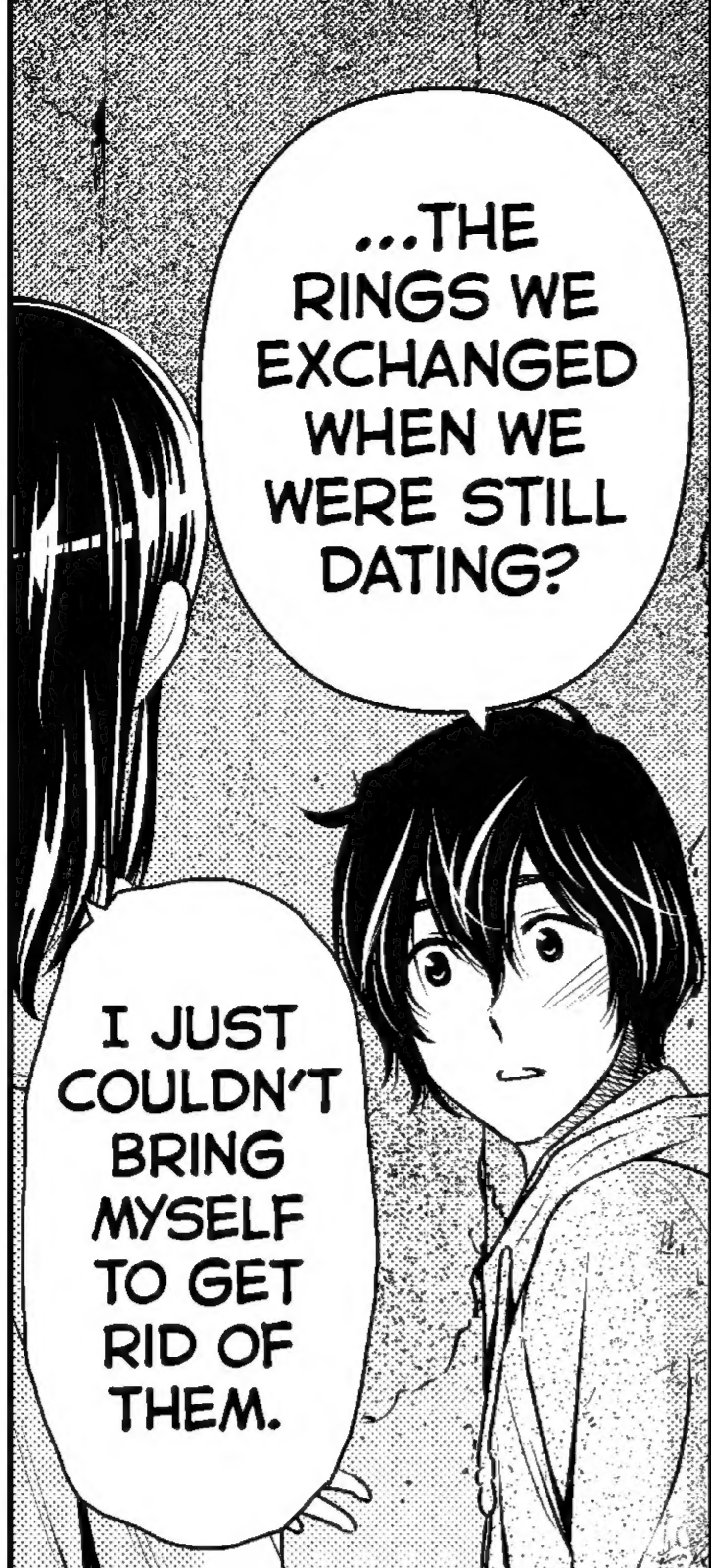
CAN YOU BLAME ME?





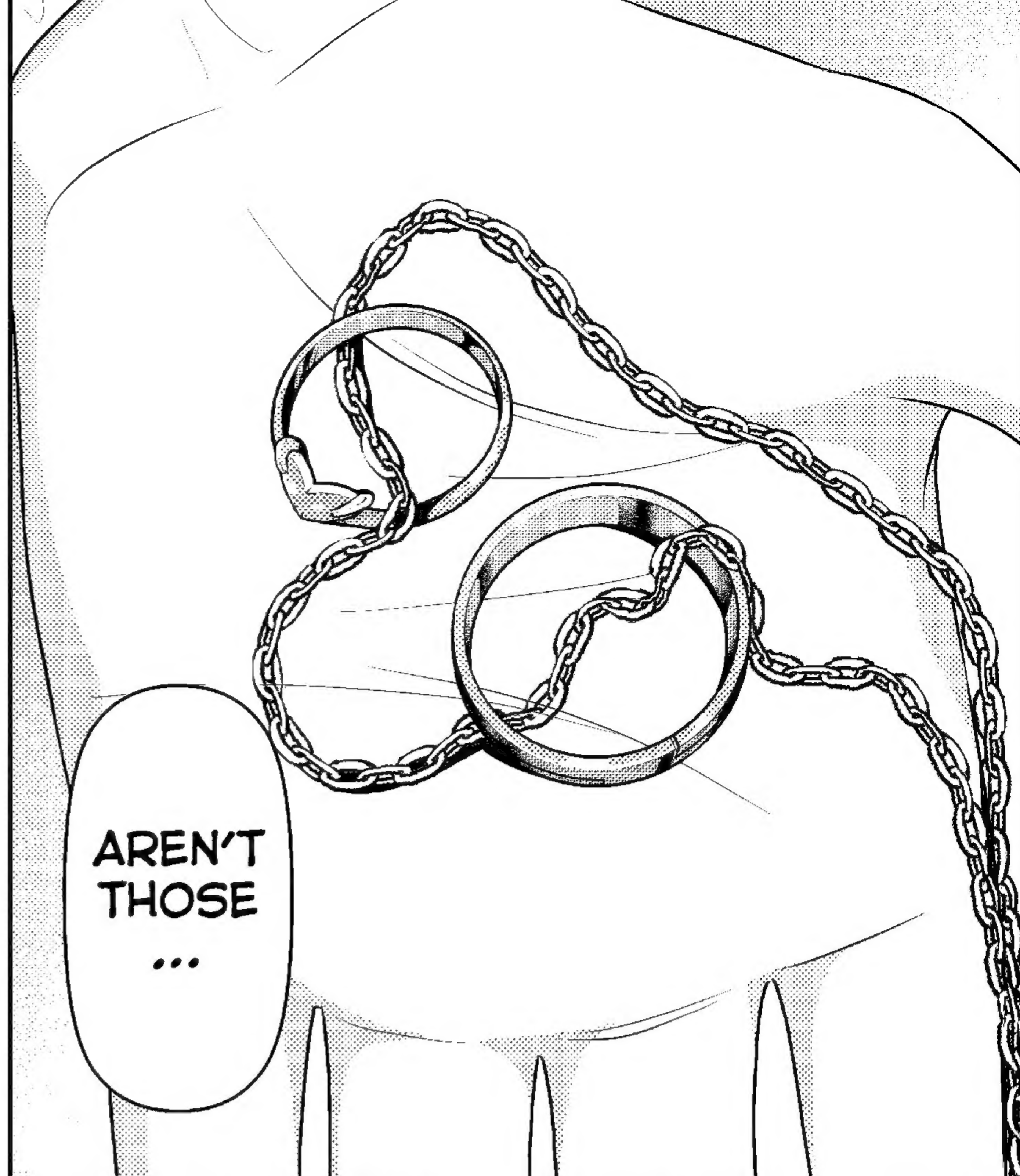
...I'VE NEVER STOPPED LOVING YOU, NATSUO-KUN.

THE TRUTH IS...



...THE RINGS WE EXCHANGED WHEN WE WERE STILL DATING?

I JUST COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO GET RID OF THEM.



AREN'T THOSE ...



WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME SOONER ?!

I'M SORRY.

I'M SO SORRY...



FWIP



GRIT...



Hi...

...NA.

HUG



IT'S THE FIRST NECK-LACE I EVER BOUGHT WITH MY OWN MONEY. IT'S 18-KARAT GOLD, TOO, SO I REALLY DIDN'T WANNA LOSE IT!

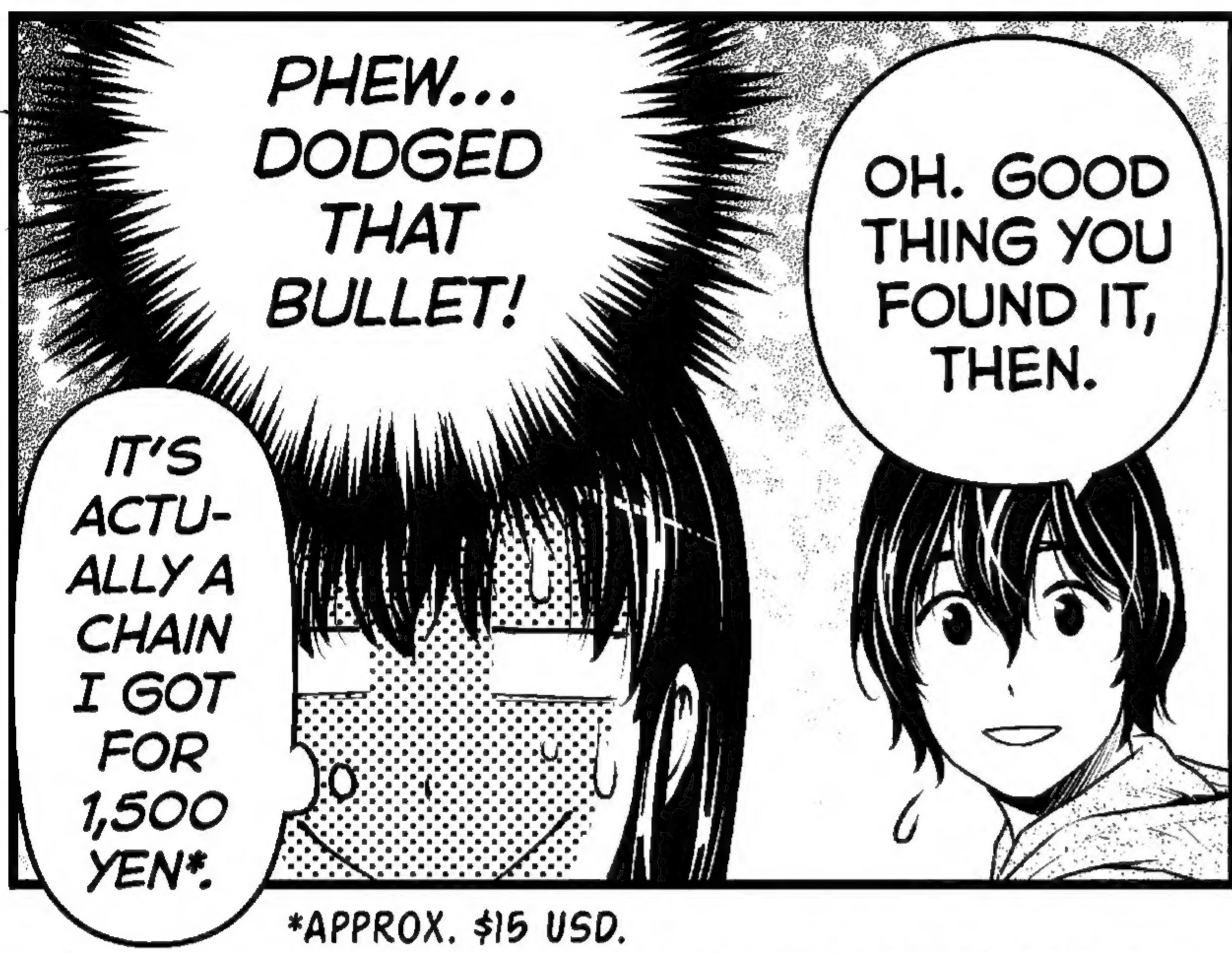
UH-HUH!

A NECK-LACE?



I...

I DROPPED THIS NECK-LACE!



PHEW... DODGED THAT BULLET!

OH. GOOD THING YOU FOUND IT, THEN.

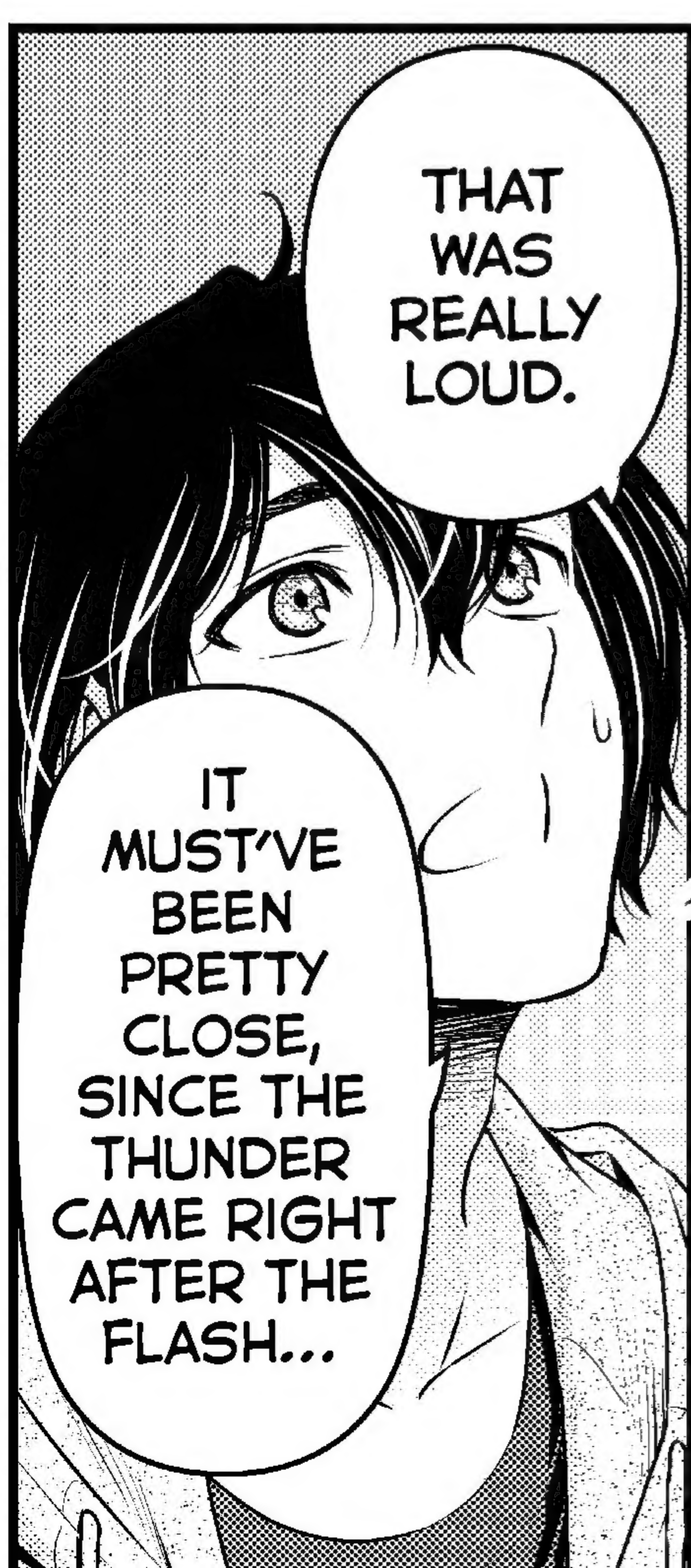
IT'S ACTUALLY A CHAIN I GOT FOR 1,500 YEN*.

*APPROX. \$15 USD.



I CAN'T HELP BUT FANTASIZE ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT...

AS A WOMAN,



THAT WAS REALLY LOUD.

IT MUST'VE BEEN PRETTY CLOSE, SINCE THE THUNDER CAME RIGHT AFTER THE FLASH...



WHOA!

...BUT I DON'T WANT TO HURT RUI, EITHER.





BUT IF IT HITS REALLY CLOSE LIKE THAT, I FREEZE UP.

I'M USUALLY FINE IF IT'S FAR AWAY,

OH...



RUI GOT REALLY SCARED DURING A STORM A WHILE AGO, SO I WAS CURIOUS.

TOO?



ESPECIALLY WHEN WE WERE ALONE IN THE HOUSE.

BUT TO BE HONEST, I WAS TERRIFIED, TOO.

EVERYTHING'S OKAY.

DON'T WORRY.

SO I FELT LIKE I HAD TO BE STRONG AND COMFORT HER.

WHEN WE WERE LITTLE, RUI WOULD GET SO SCARED WHENEVER THERE WAS A THUNDER-STORM,



MAYBE SHE'S SHIVERING ALL ALONE BACK AT THE COTTAGE NOW...

I HOPE RUI'S ALL RIGHT. SHE'S EVEN WORSE WITH THUNDER THAN I AM.



...TO HELP TAKE YOUR MIND OFF OF IT?

WHY DON'T WE TALK ABOUT SOMETHING...



WELL, STAYING QUIET'S ONLY GONNA MAKE THINGS WORSE.





I'VE BEEN
MAKING
WAY FEWER
MISTAKES,
AND THE
REGULARS
EVEN KNOW
ME BY NAME
NOW.

NEVER
BEEN
BETTER!

OH,
YEAH?
THAT'S
GREAT!



SO
WHY
DON'T
WE
CATCH
UP?

I MEAN, WE
HAVEN'T HAD
MUCH TIME
TO CHAT
LATELY.

TALK
?

HOW'RE
THINGS
AT
WORK?

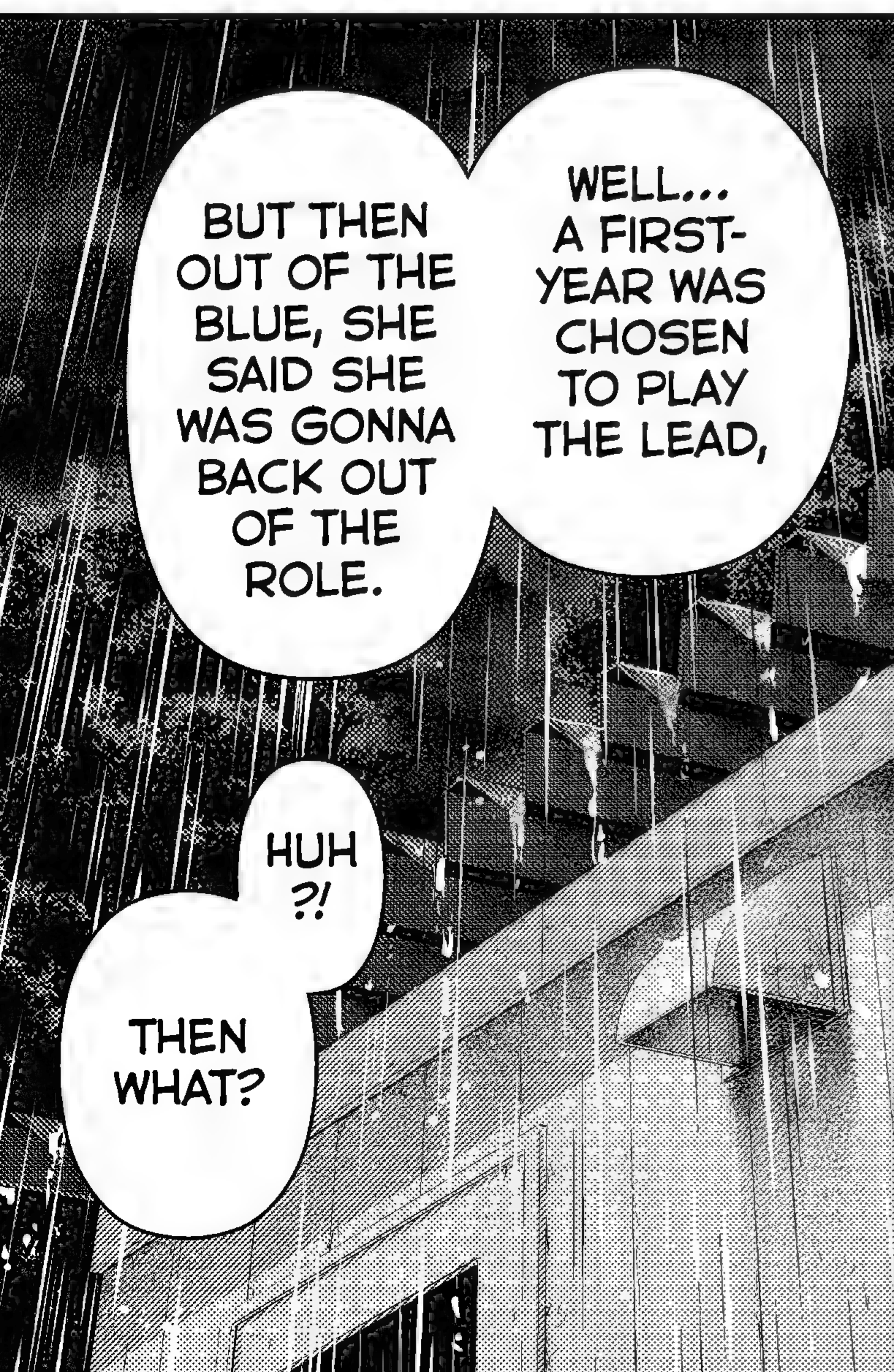


IT WAS
HELL!

I WISH!

DID
YOU
HAVE
FUN?

WHAT
ABOUT YOU?
I HEARD YOU
WENT TO A
TRAINING
CAMP WITH
YOUR CLUB.



BUT THEN
OUT OF THE
BLUE, SHE
SAID SHE
WAS GONNA
BACK OUT
OF THE
ROLE.

WELL...
A FIRST-
YEAR WAS
CHOSEN
TO PLAY
THE LEAD,

HUH
?!

THEN
WHAT?



DEALING
WITH
PEOPLE
IS ALWAYS
HARD,
WHETHER
IT'S AT
WORK OR
A CLUB.

THAT'S
NOT
TRUE.

WHAT
HAP-
PENED
?



OH...
I MEAN, IT'S
JUST A CLUB,
SO IT'S
NOWHERE NEAR
AS ROUGH
AS YOUR
JOB, BUT...



WELL,
I'M GLAD
SHE CAME
AROUND IN
THE END.

I
SEE
...



I LEARN
SOME-
THING NEW
EVERY TIME
I TALK TO
THEM.

EVERY-
ONE'S A
SPECIALIST
OF SOME
SORT.

ESPE-
CIALLY
THE
UPPER-
CLASS-
MEN.

EVERY-
ONE
IN THE
CLUB IS
AMAZ-
ING.



I DOUBT I
WOULD'VE
CONVINCED
HER ON
MY OWN.

YEAH, BUT IT
ONLY WORKED
OUT BECAUSE
I HAD THE
UPPERCLASS-
MEN AND MY
FRIENDS
HELPING ME.



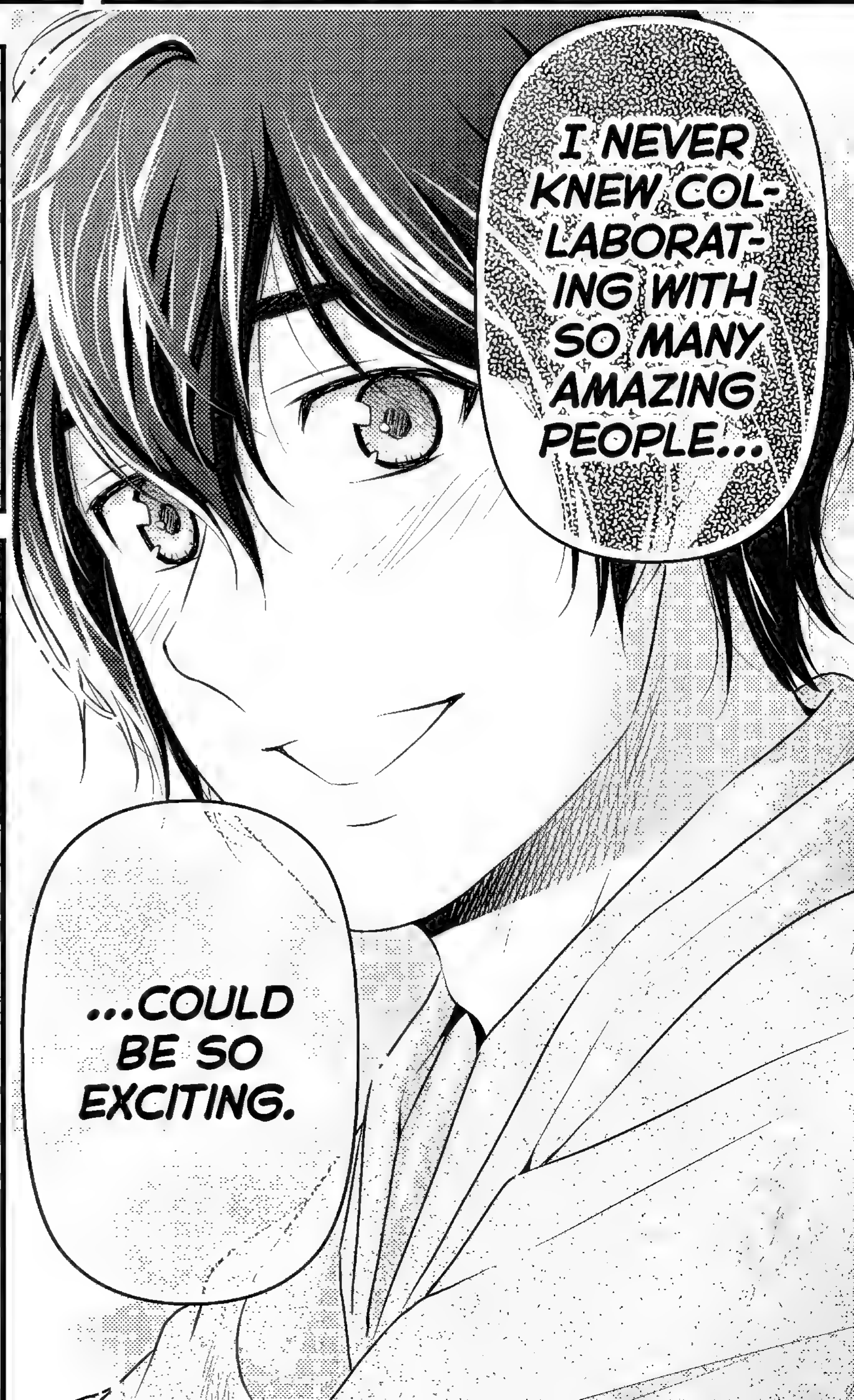
...THAT
I NEVER
WOULD
HAVE IF
I'D STUCK
TO JUST
BOOKS.

I'M
FINDING NEW
INSPIRATION
AND MAKING
ALL KINDS
OF NEW
DISCOVER-
IES...



OH,
YEAH!

THAT'S
RIGHT.



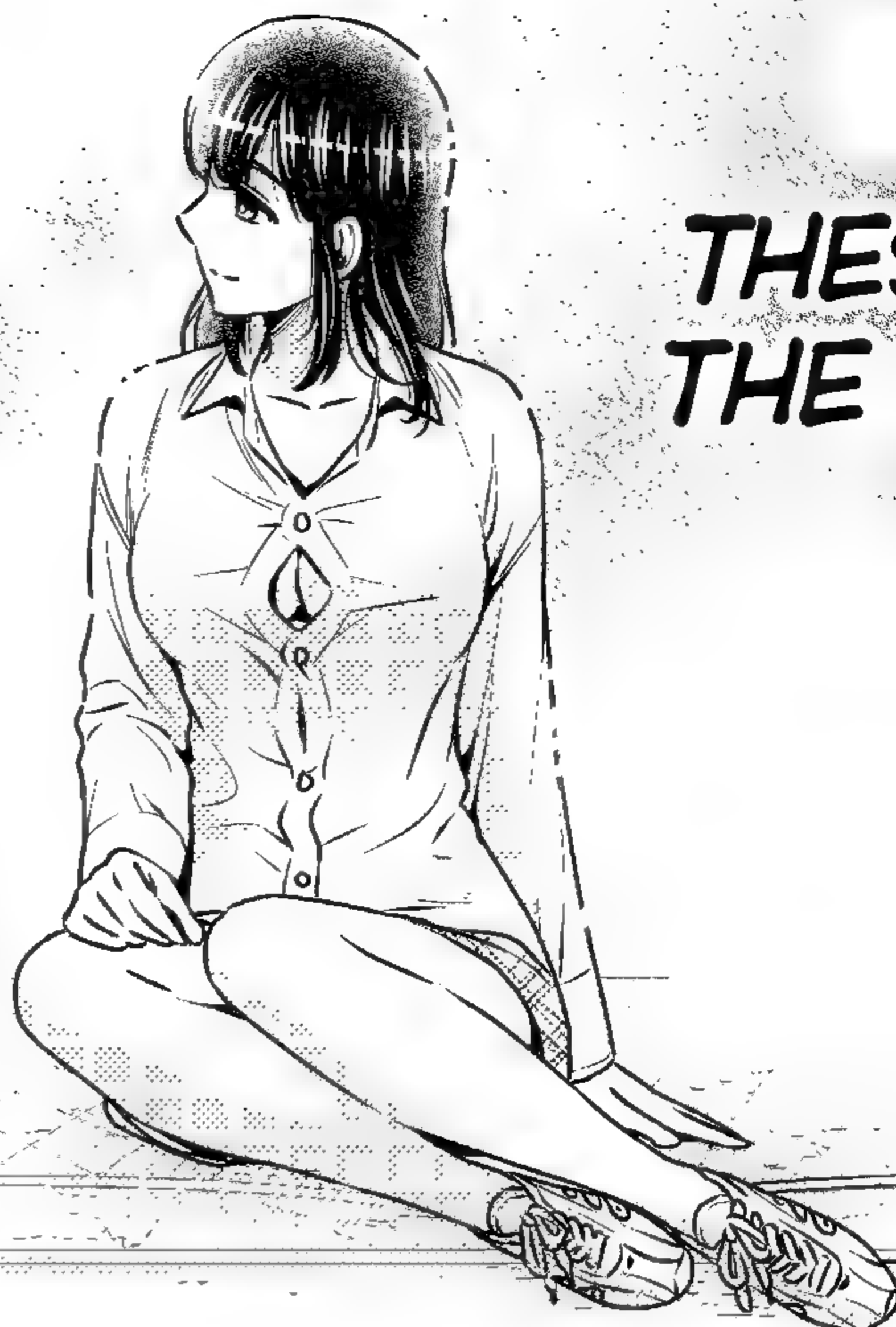
I NEVER
KNEW COL-
LABORAT-
ING WITH
SO MANY
AMAZING
PEOPLE...

...COULD
BE SO
EXCITING.

...I FELL
IN LOVE
WITH.



THESE ARE
THE EYES...



HIS EYES
WERE
ALWAYS SO
FULL OF
PASSION
AND LIFE.

HIS
FAVORITE
BOOKS,
STORIES
HE WANTED
TO WRITE...



...NATSUO-KUN
WOULD OFTEN
TALK TO ME
ABOUT NOVELS.

AFTER WE
STARTED
CHATTING
ON THE
ROOF...



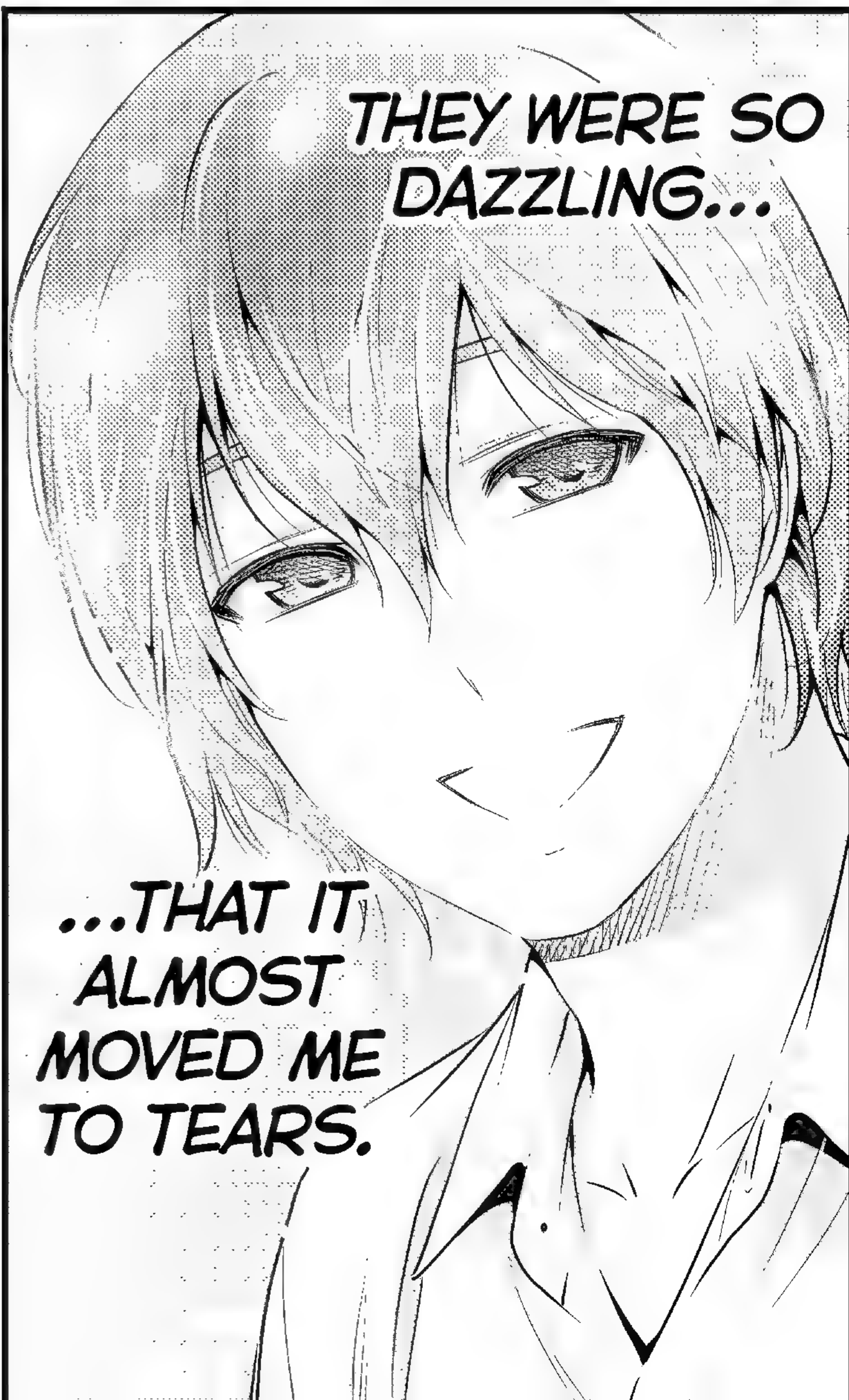
I LOST
SIGHT OF
THAT IN MY
LONELINESS.

AFTER I
FOUND OUT
ABOUT HIM
AND RUI,

I WAS SAD
THAT I COULD
NEVER HAVE
NATSUO-KUN'S
HEART...

THEY WERE SO
DAZZLING...

...THAT IT
ALMOST
MOVED ME
TO TEARS.





**...BUT I
GUESS...**

**...THIS
MAY BE
ANOTHER
WAY THAT
I CAN
LOVE HIM.**



GLAD TO
HEAR IT.

I WAS SO
CAUGHT
UP IN OUR
CONVERSA-
TION THAT
I DIDN'T
REALIZE...

OH!

YOU'RE
RIGHT.

SOUNDS
LIKE THE
THUNDER'S
DIED DOWN.



WELL,
GOOD
NIGHT
...



OKAY.

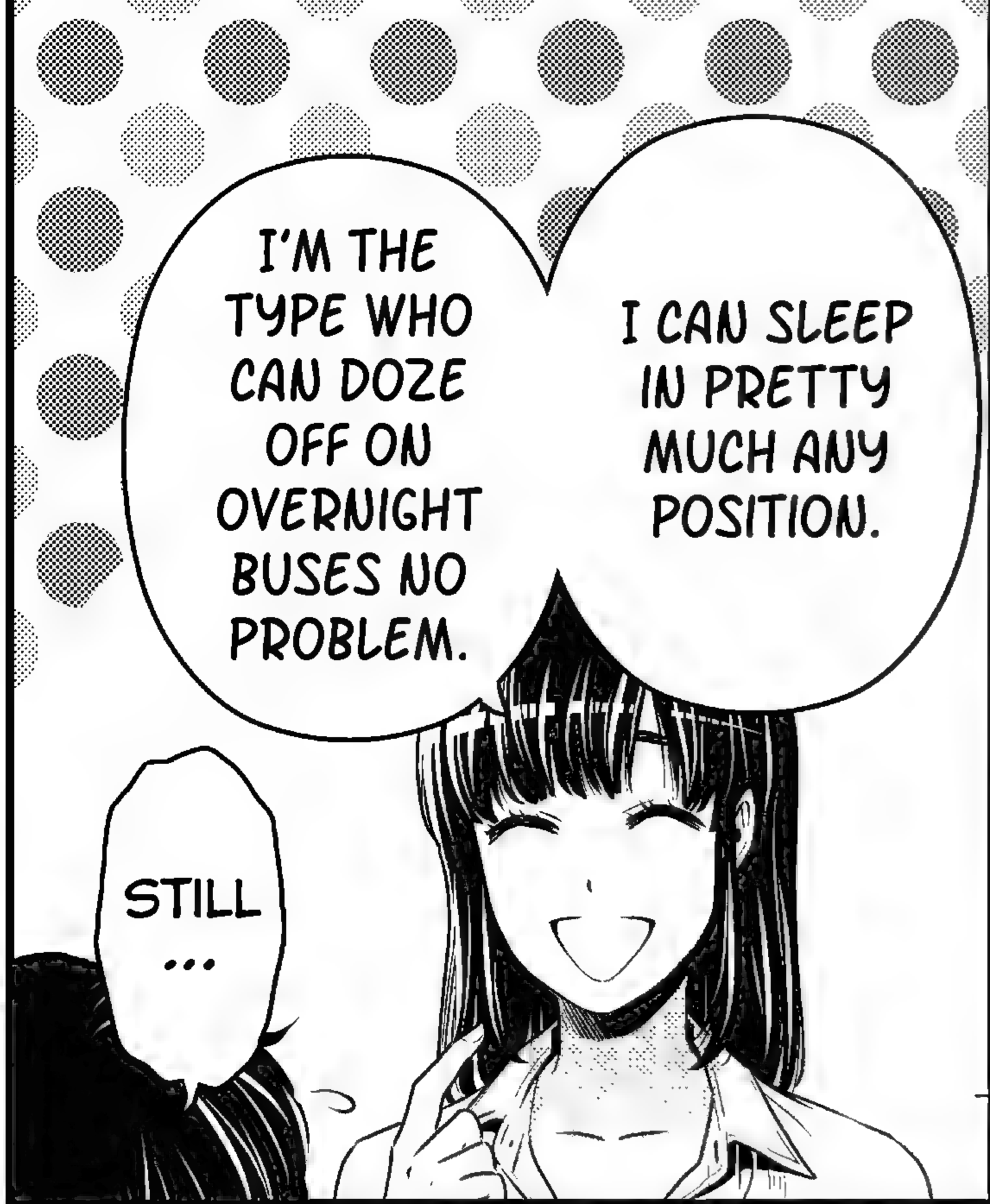
ARE
YOU
COLD,
HINA-
NEE?

NO, I'M
FINE.

IT'S
GETTING
PRETTY LATE.
WHY DON'T
WE TRY TO
GET SOME
SLEEP?







I'M THE
TYPE WHO
CAN DOZE
OFF ON
OVERNIGHT
BUSES NO
PROBLEM.

I CAN SLEEP
IN PRETTY
MUCH ANY
POSITION.

STILL
...



OH, NO
WORRIES.

I CAN'T
MAKE YOU
DO THAT!

HOW
WILL YOU
SLEEP
IF MY
HEAD'S
IN YOUR
LAP?

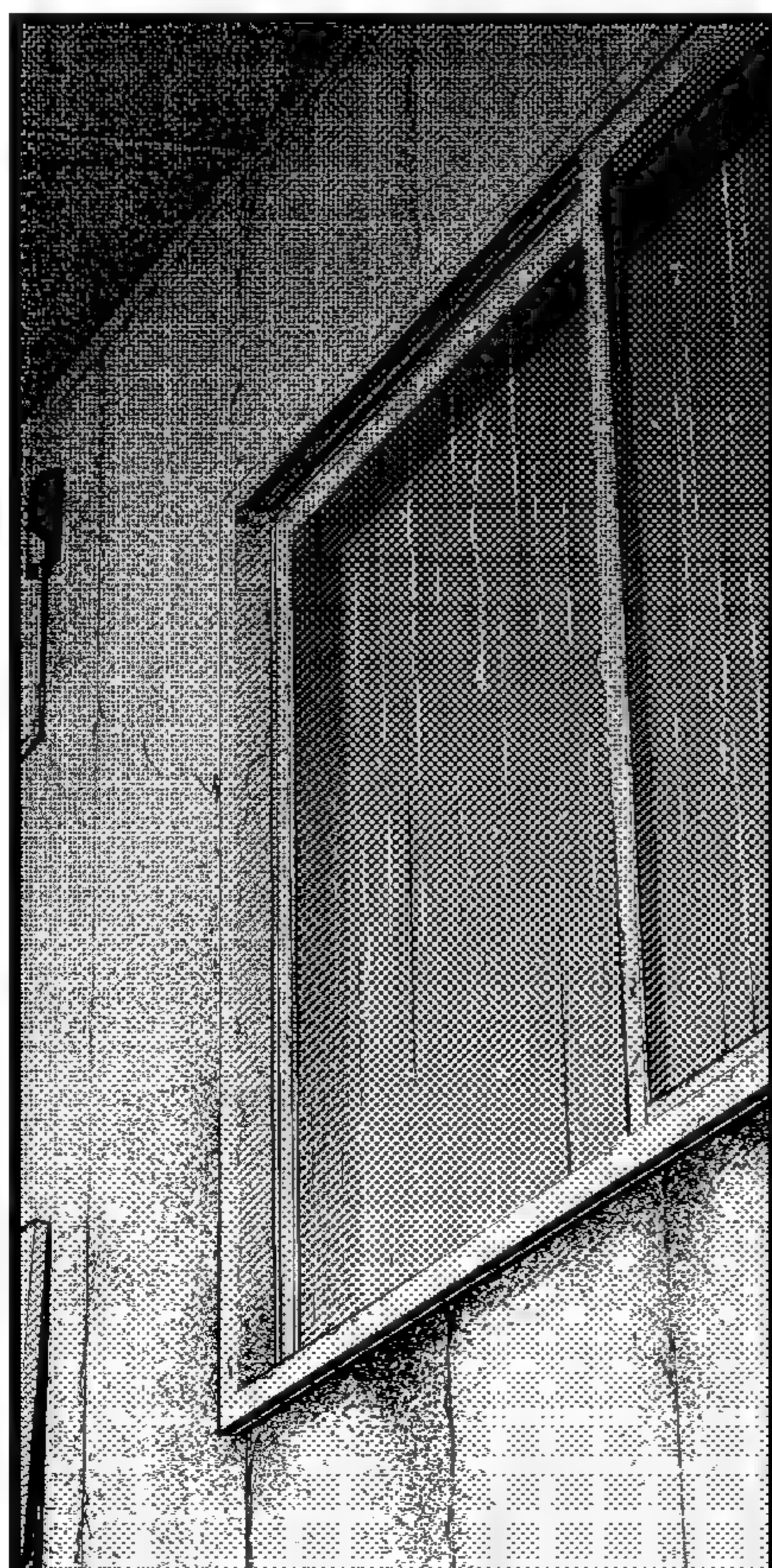


I USED
TO DO THE
SAME THING
FOR RUI ALL
THE TIME,
TOO.



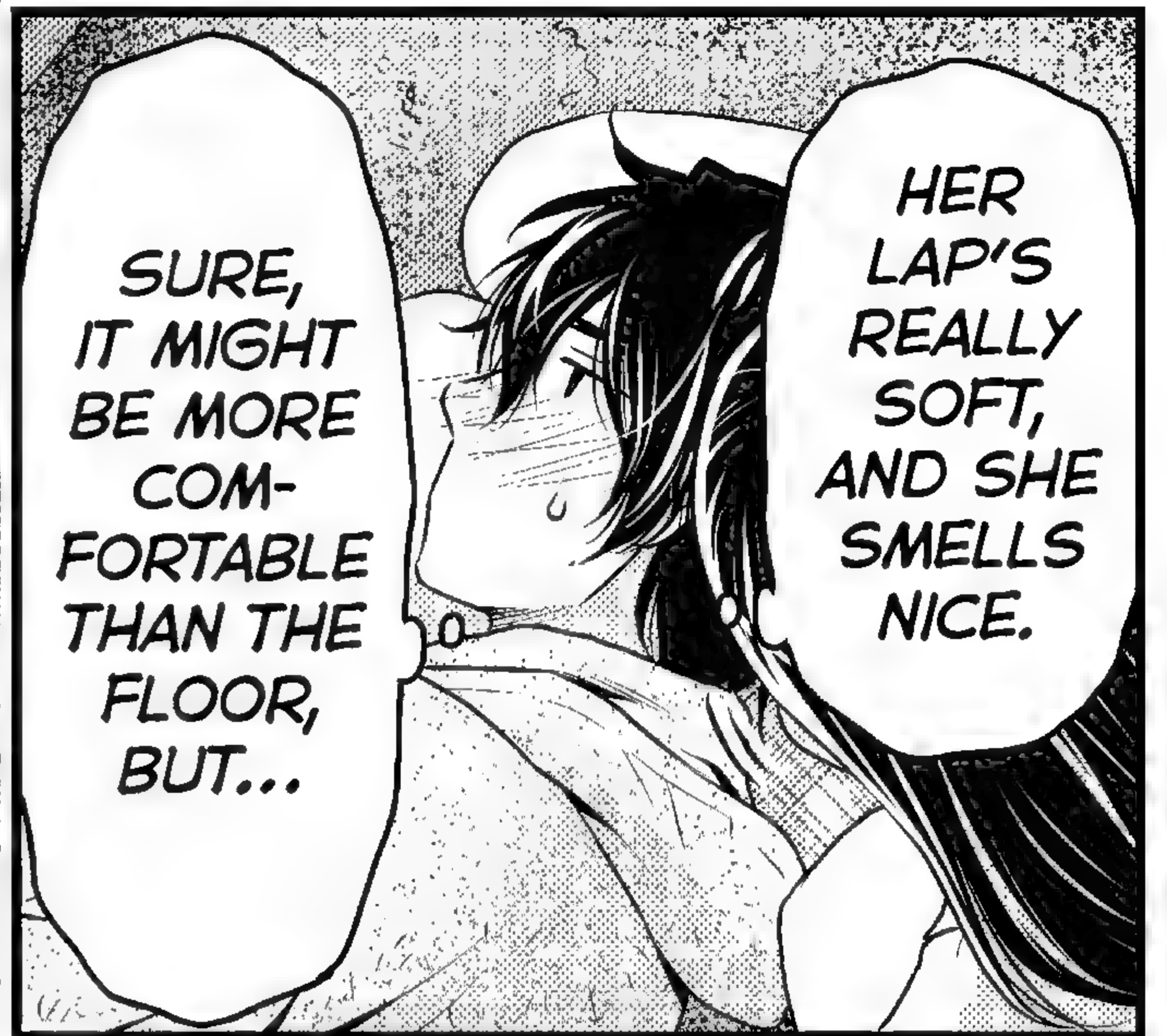
WELL,

IF YOU
INSIST...



I STILL
HAVE TO
THANK
YOU FOR
COMING
TO MY
RESCUE.

LET YOUR
BIG SISTER
SPOIL YOU
ONCE IN A
WHILE.







I
KNOW
...

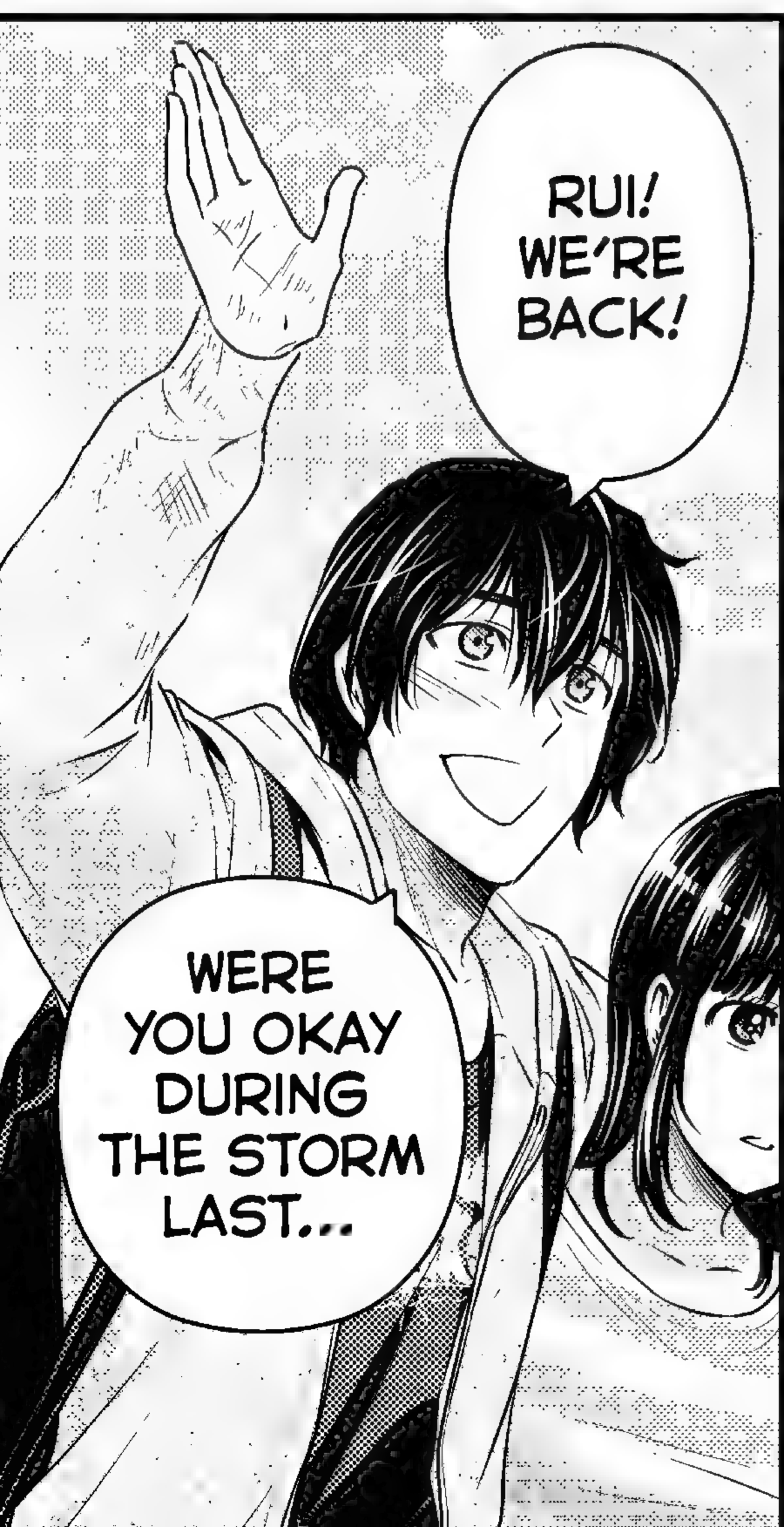


HE CALLED
AND SAID
THEY WERE
UP AND ON
THEIR WAY.

DON'T
WORRY,
RUI-
CHAN.



WHY

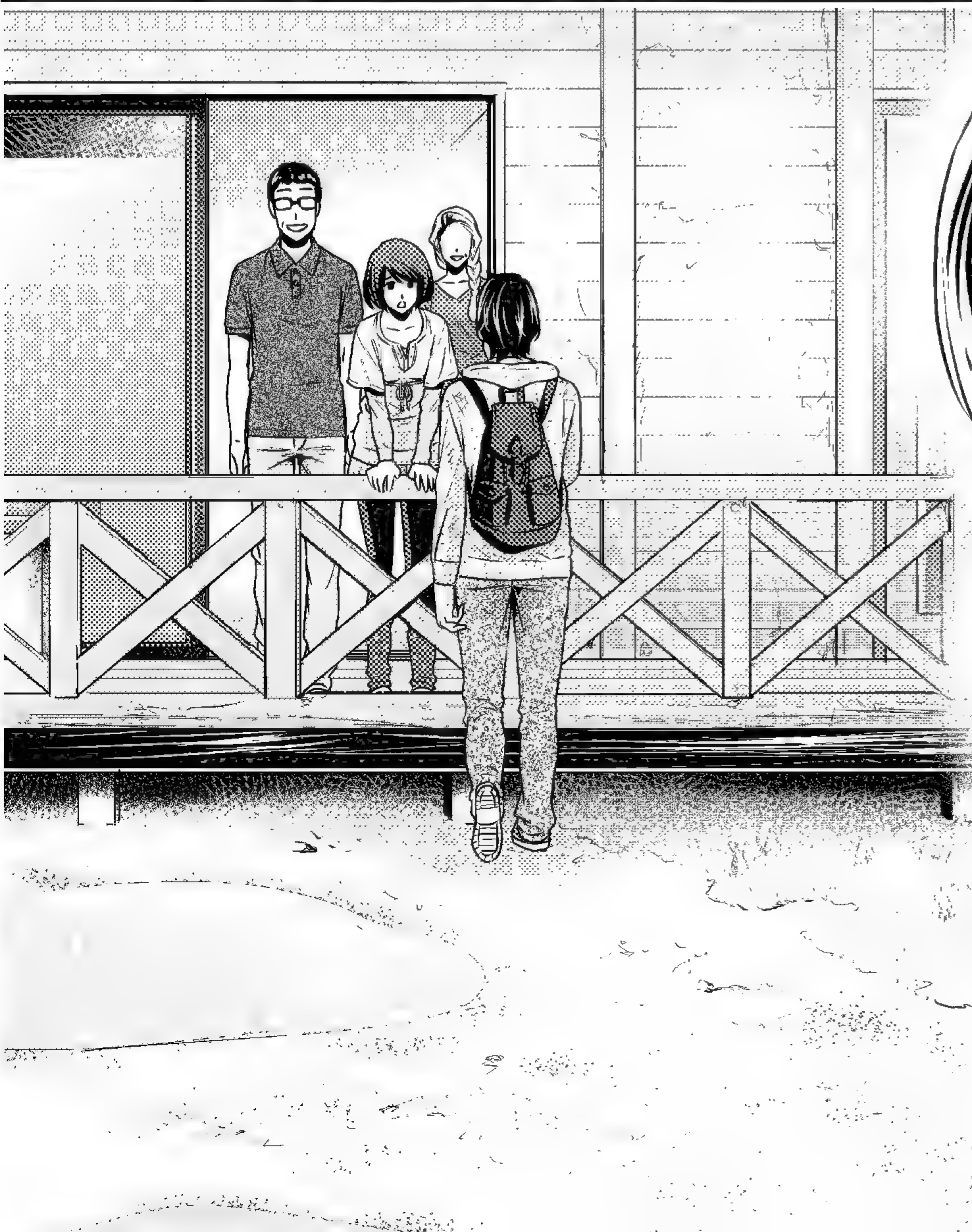
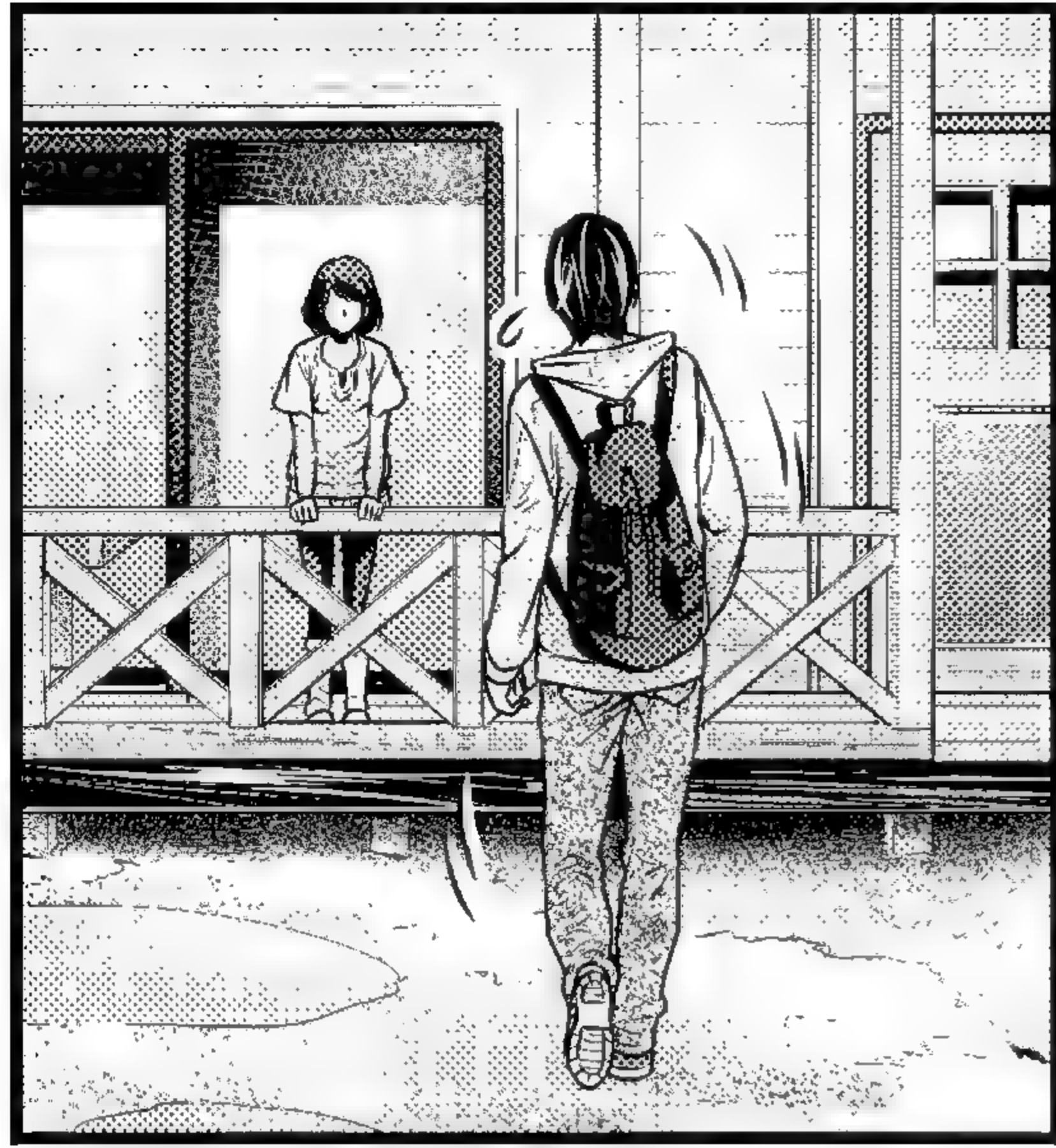


RUI!
WE'RE
BACK!

WERE
YOU OKAY
DURING
THE STORM
LAST...



AH
...



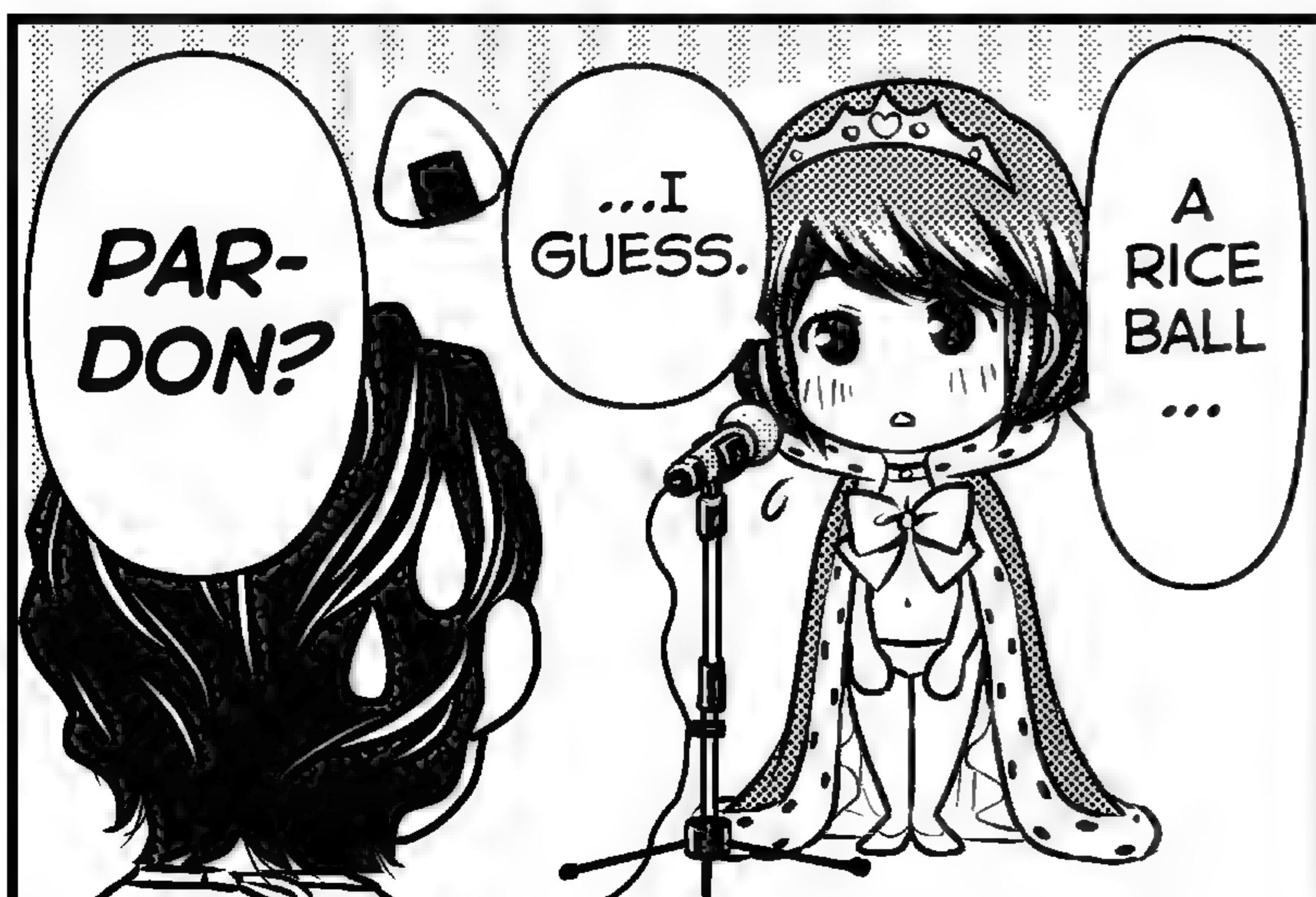
DG 4-PANEL THEATER



GOAL



SCENT





YOU'RE
GONNA
CATCH A
COLD LIKE
THAT.

HINA-
NEE...

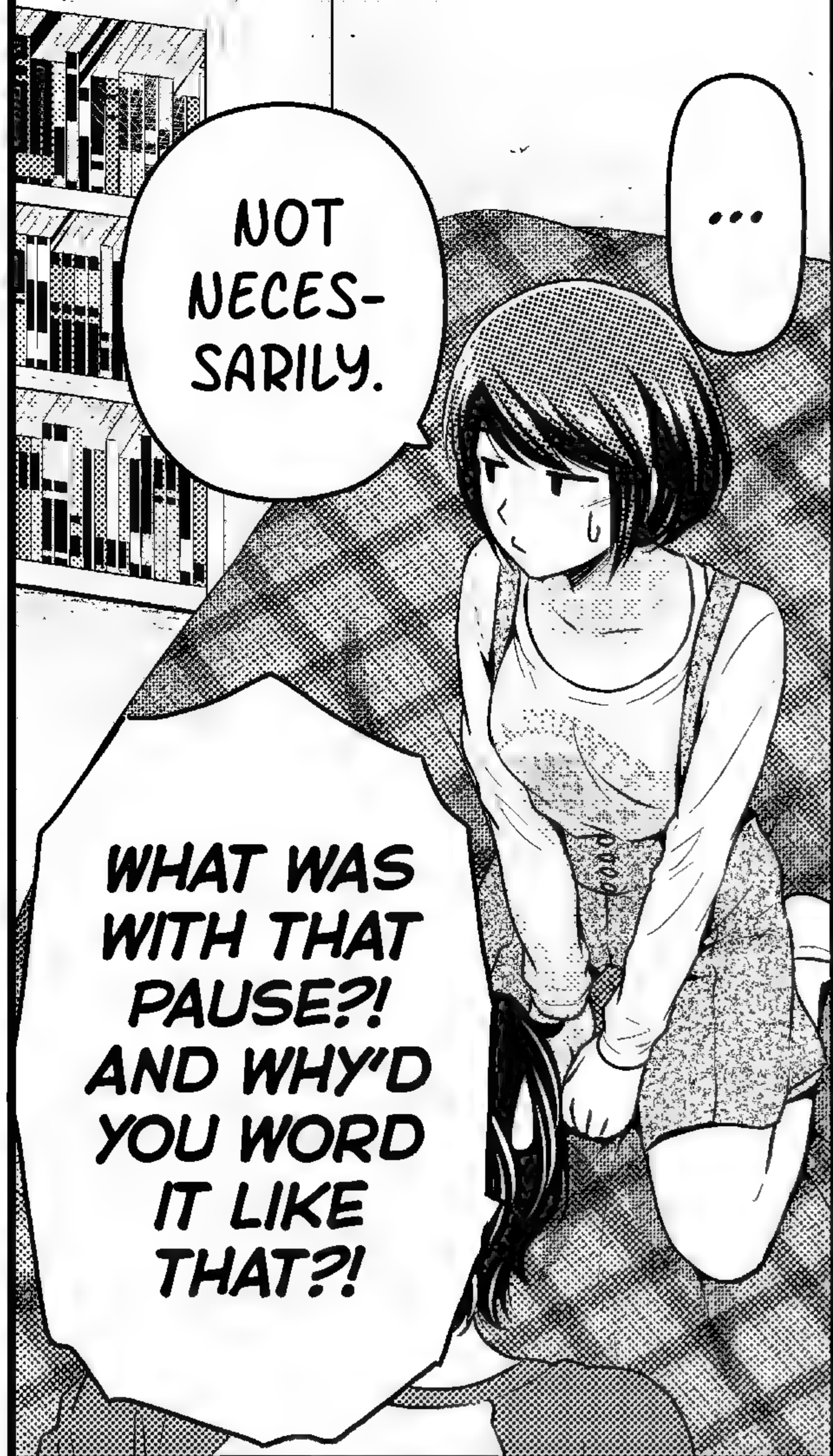
I'LL
WARM
YOU
UP.

BUT ARE
YOU SURE?
YOU HAVE
RUI...

I'M
SO
HAP-
PY.

SHE'S NOT
HERE RIGHT
NOW...





NOT
NECES-
SARILY.

...

WHAT WAS
WITH THAT
PAUSE?!
AND WHY'D
YOU WORD
IT LIKE
THAT?!



YOU HAVEN'T
BEEN SAYING
THIS KINDA
STUFF TO
HINA-NEE, TOO,
HAVE YOU?

RUI...



HUH
?!

I MIGHT'VE
GIVEN HER
THE COLD
SHOULDER
A LITTLE...

...

DID
YOU DO
SOME-
THING
SIMILAR
TO HER
?!



SHE WAS
WORRIED
THAT YOU
MIGHT BE
GETTING
SCARED
BY THE
THUNDER,
Y'KNOW!



BUT
HINA-NEE
DOESN'T
DESERVE
THAT!

I'M SURE
SHE FEELS
JUST AS
BAD ABOUT
IT!

I KNOW
YOU WERE
WORRIED,
AND YOU CAN
TAKE IT OUT
ON ME ALL
YOU WANT!





OH,
YOU
...



NATSUO
GOT MAD AT
ME WHEN I
TOLD HIM.

I JUST
THOUGHT
I SHOULD
APOLOGIZE.



THEN
CAME BACK
IN THE
MORNING
LEANING
ON EACH
OTHER.

I GOT
JEALOUS
THAT YOU
TWO SPENT
THE NIGHT
TOGETHER,

OH
...

I'M
SORRY
FOR
AVOIDING
YOU...



I
FIGURED
THAT
WAS IT.

I
KNEW WE
PROBABLY
HAD YOU
WORRIED
SICK THAT
NIGHT.



BUT...

...YOU
SHOULDN'T
FIGHT WITH
NATSUO-KUN
OVER STUFF
LIKE THIS,
OKAY?



GARLIC
OYSTERS,
OCTOPUS
CARPACCIO,
AND GNOCCHI
IN A CREAMY
TOMATO
SAUCE.

WHAT
KIND OF
SNACKS
DID YOU
MAKE
FOR ME?

OOH! I
SHOULD DO
WHITE WINE
TONIGHT,
THEN! ♪

OOF.

I CAN'T
BREATHE,
RUI.

HUG

#

YOU'RE
NOT
LISTEN-
ING!

BUT THAT
ISN'T THE
RIGHT
TONE FOR
THIS LINE!

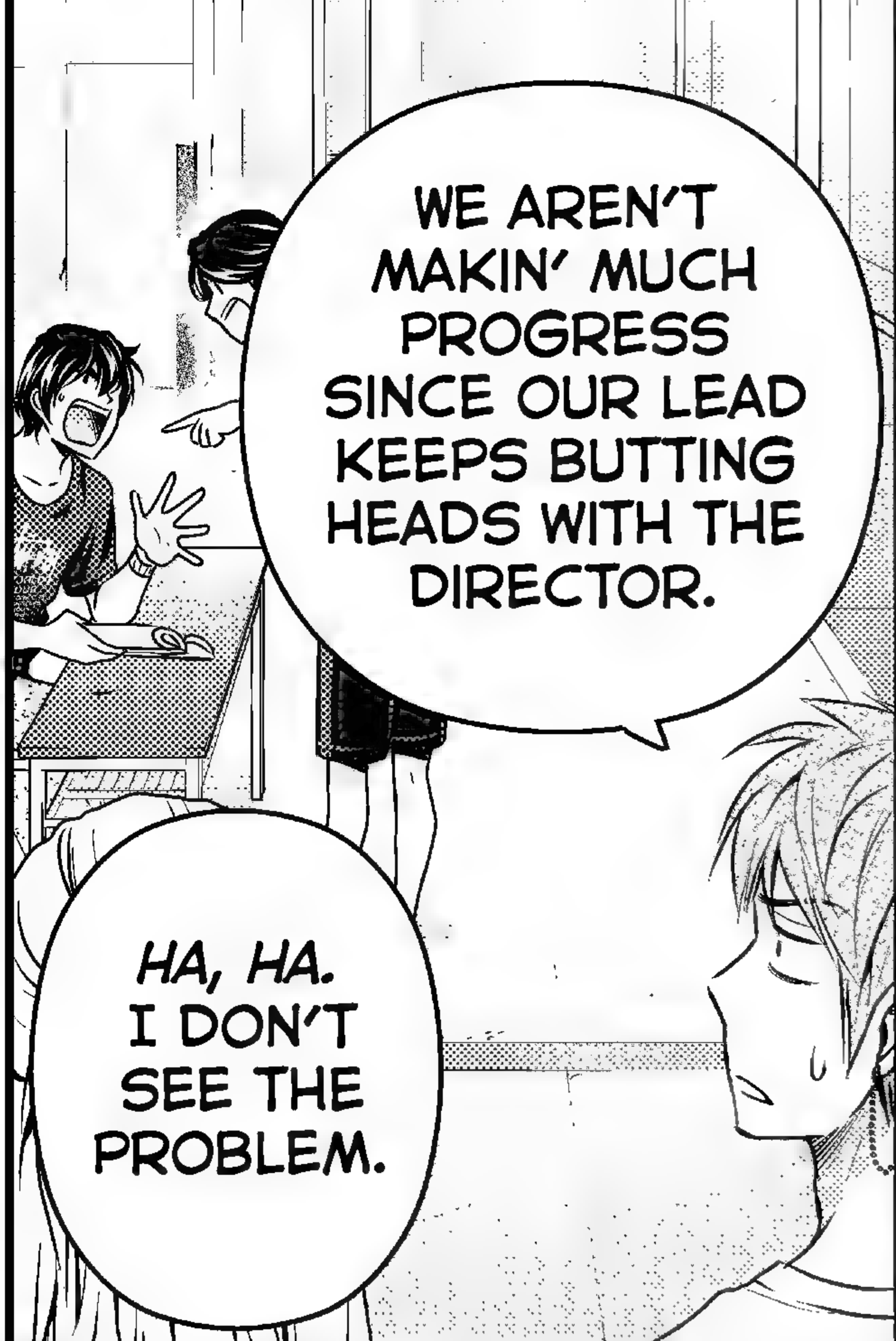
OF
COURSE
I DO!

I DON'T
WANT IT
TO FEEL
CON-
TRIVED!

THIS PART
WILL HAVE
A BIGGER
IMPACT
IF IT'S A
LITTLE
MORE
DRAMATIC!

THEATER
ACTING
ISN'T
ANYTHING
LIKE MOVIES
OR TV! DO
YOU GET
THAT?!





WE AREN'T
MAKIN' MUCH
PROGRESS
SINCE OUR LEAD
KEEPS BUTTING
HEADS WITH THE
DIRECTOR.

HA, HA.
I DON'T
SEE THE
PROBLEM.



NARA-
SAN.

OOP.

HARD
AT IT,
I SEE.



THESE
THINGS
USUALLY WORK
THEMSELVES
OUT IF YOU
LET THEM
RUN THEIR
COURSE.



HEY, FUJII!
DON'T FORGET
WE'VE GOTTA
CHECK THE
PROPS AFTER
THIS!

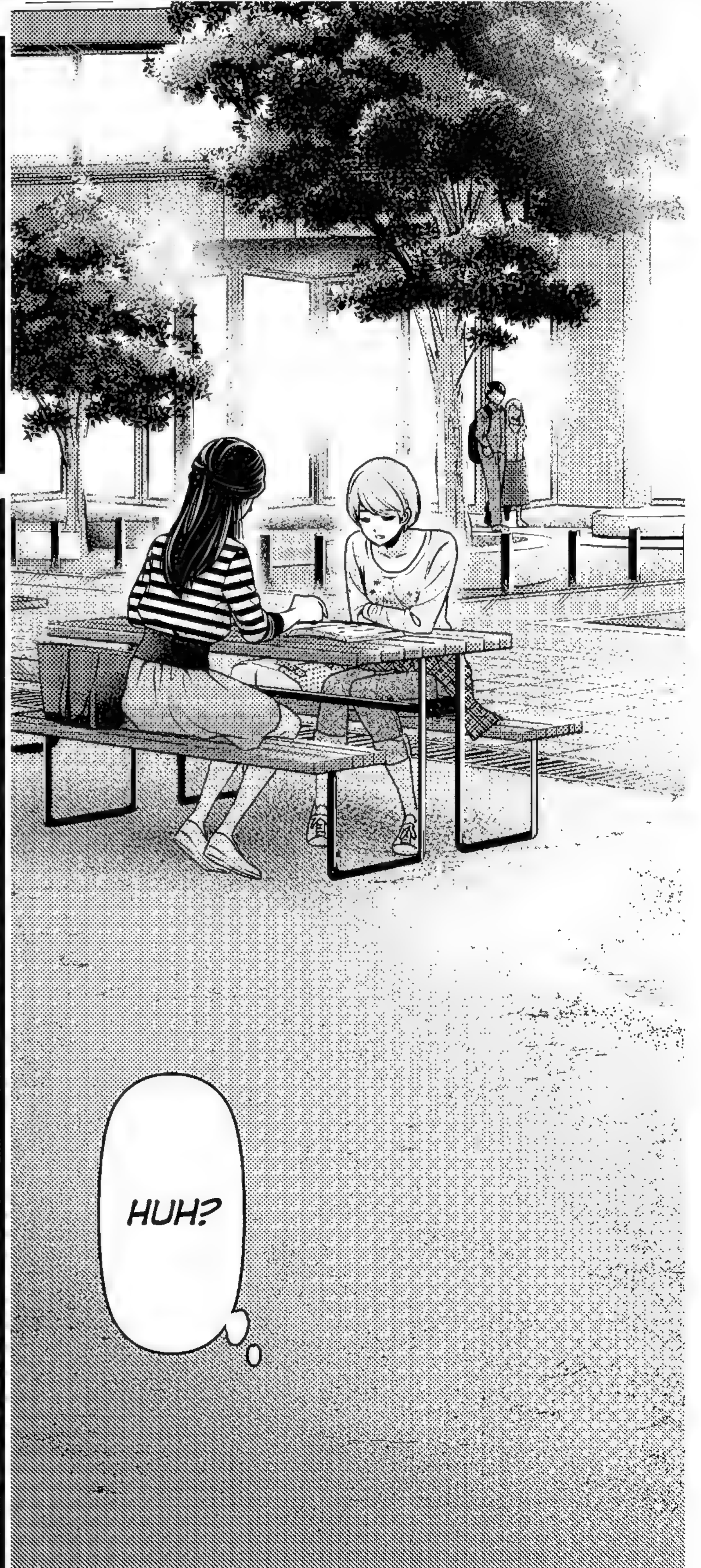
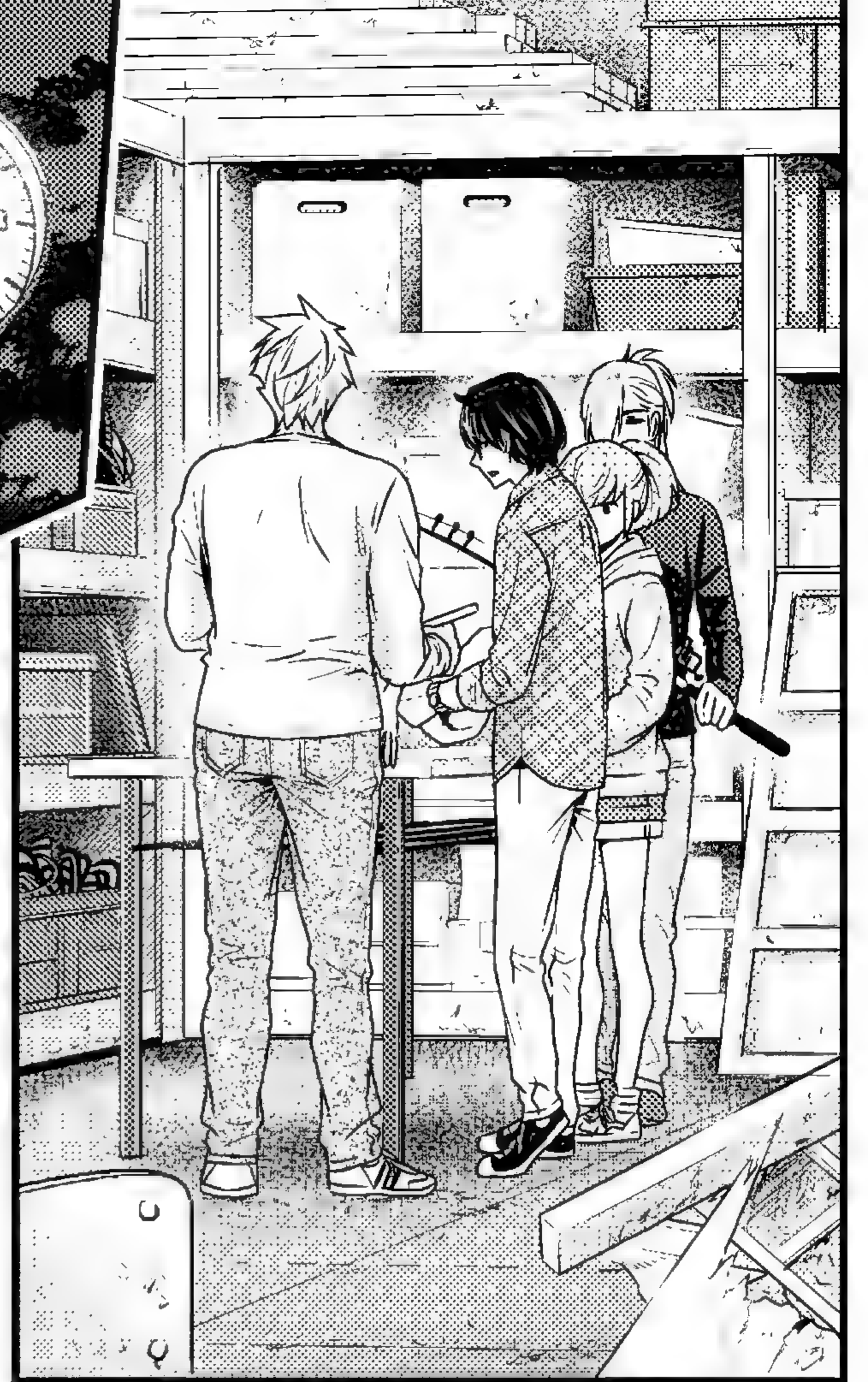
OH!

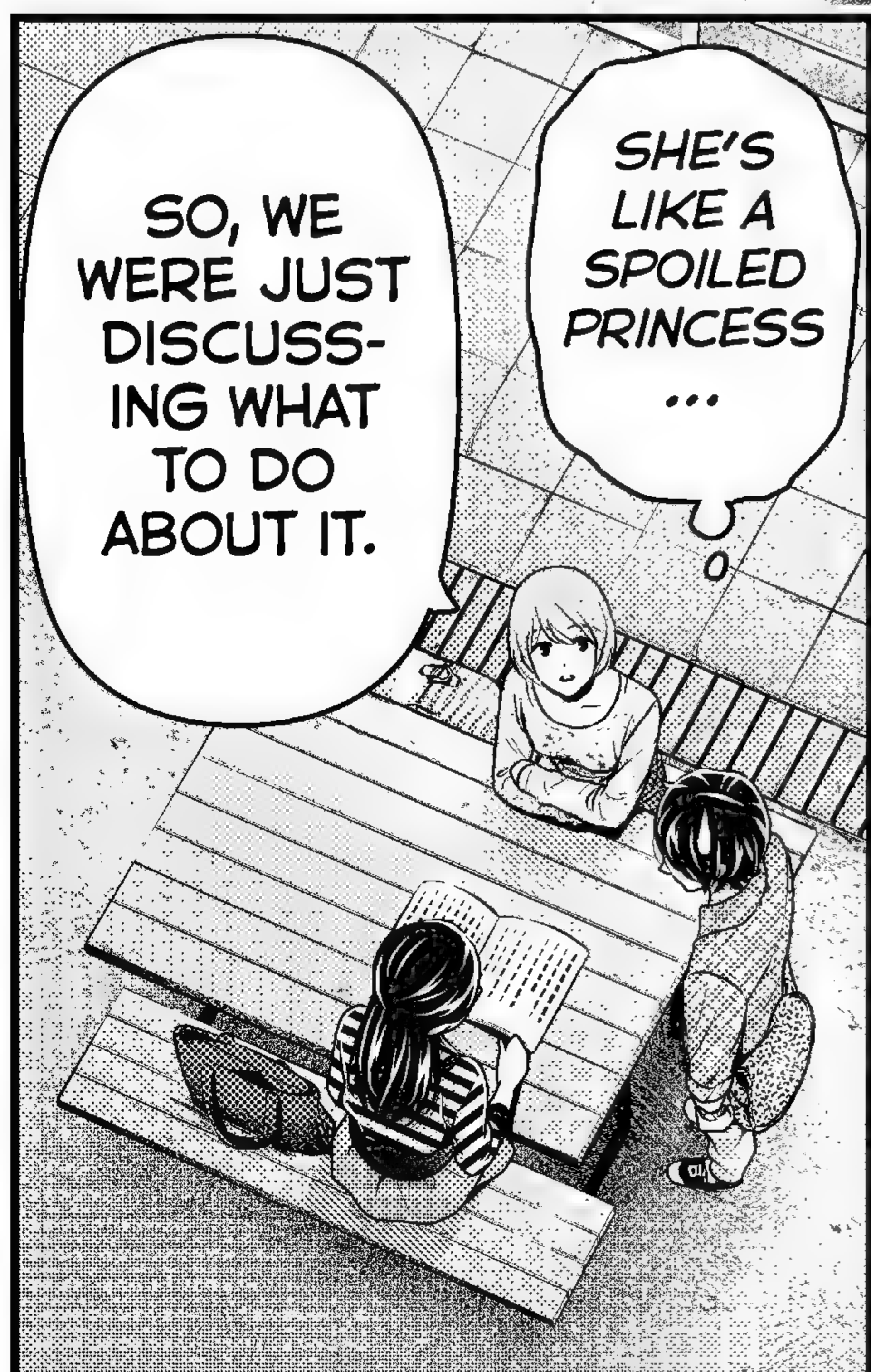
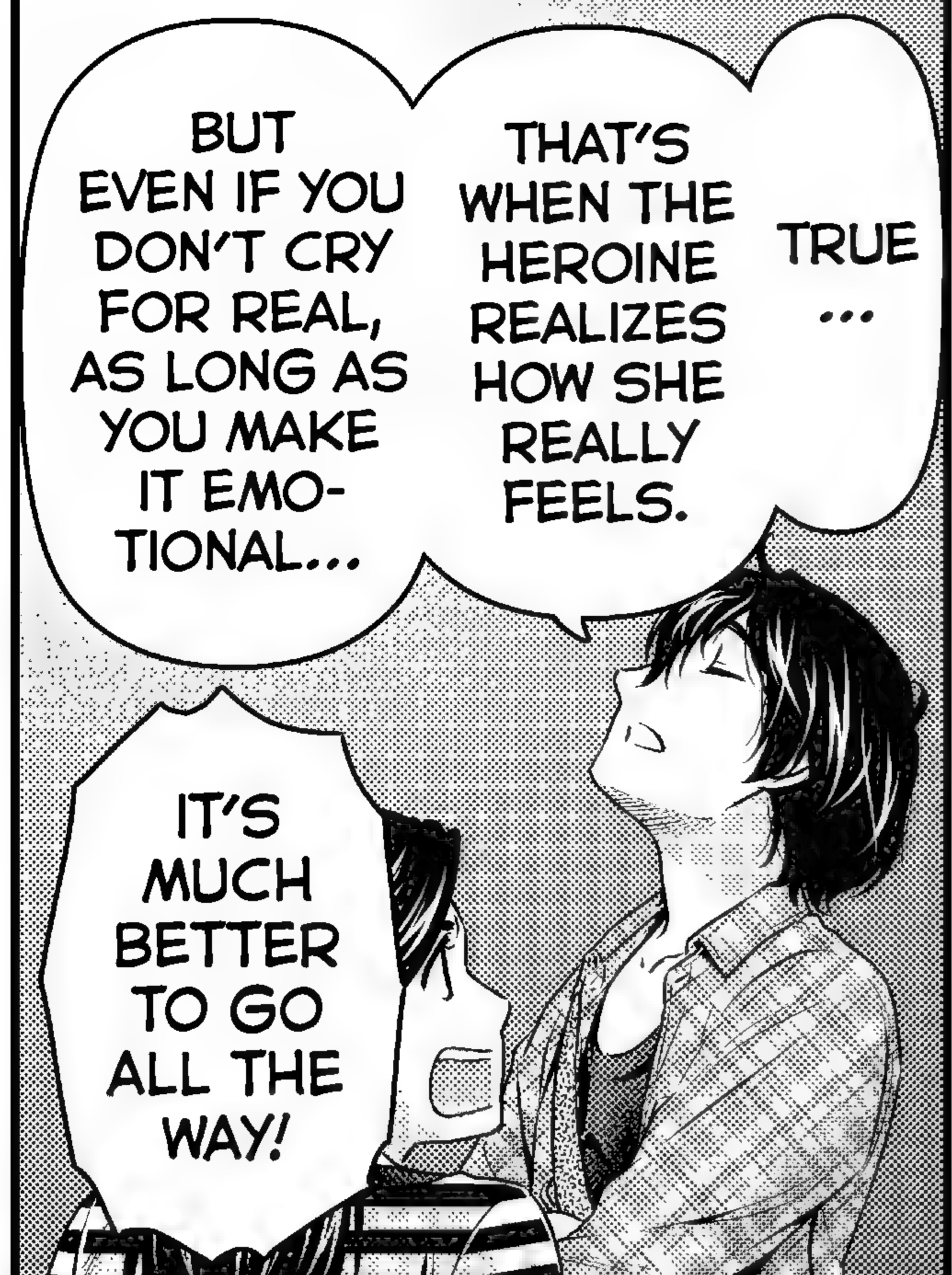
RIGHT!

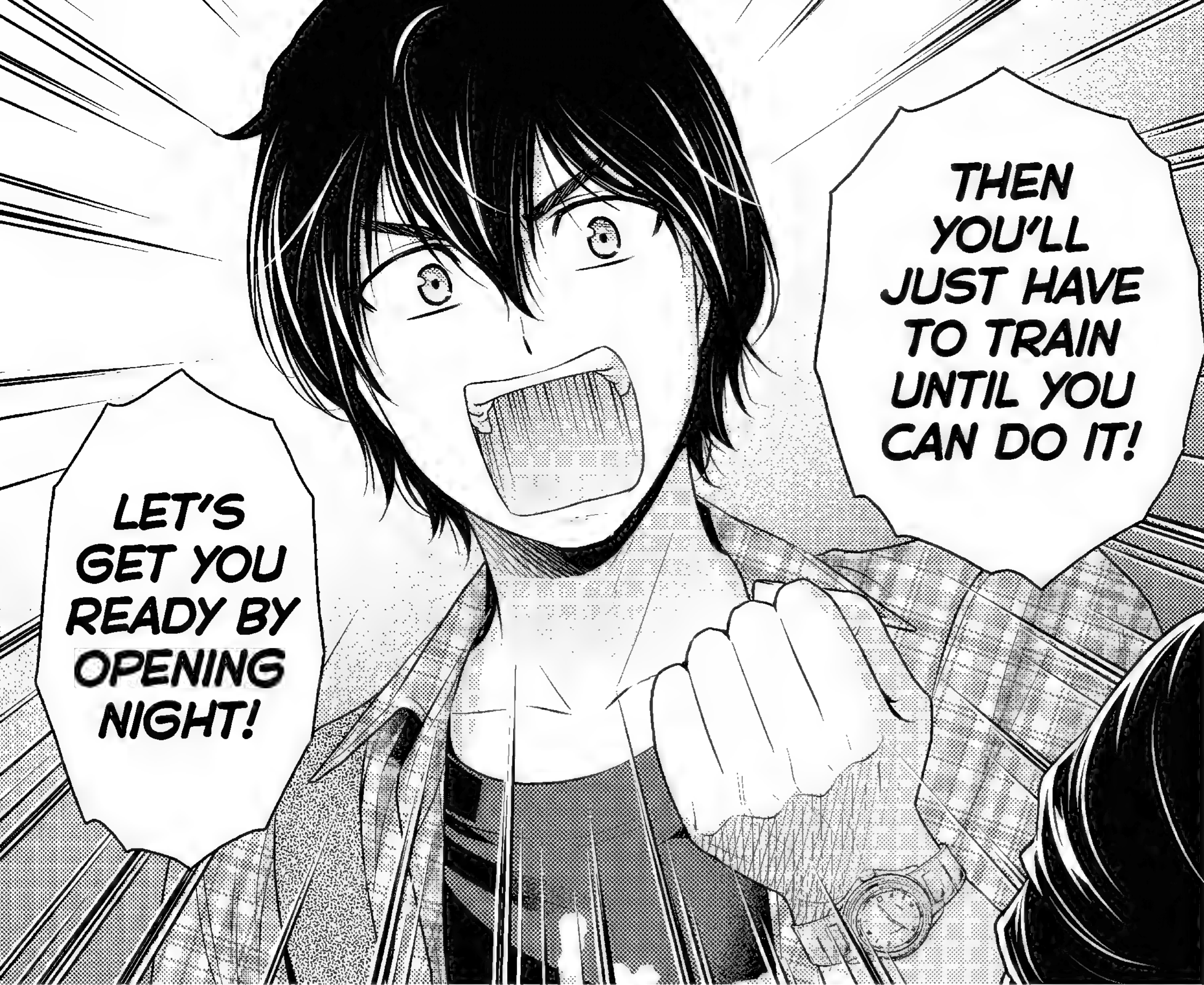


SORRY
'BOUT
THAT...

SERIZAWA'S
CHEEKINESS
IS ALMOST
ADORABLE
COMPARED
TO YOU
DURING
YOUR FIRST
YEAR.







**LET'S
GET YOU
READY BY
OPENING
NIGHT!**

**THEN
YOU'LL
JUST HAVE
TO TRAIN
UNTIL YOU
CAN DO IT!**



I'VE
GOT
IT.

ALL
RIGHT.



EVEN THE
MOST FAMOUS
ACTRESSES
HAD TO HONE
THEIR SKILLS!

WELL,
WHAT
ELSE
CAN WE
DO?

TRAIN
...?



**I...
I WASN'T
ACTING
THEN!**

WHAT
WAS
THAT
ABOUT
?

BUT DIDN'T
YOU GET
TEARY-EYED
WHEN YOU
AGREED TO
PLAY THE
LEAD,
SERIZAWA?



OR TRY TO
IMAGINE
SOMETHING
THAT WOULD
MAKE YOU
SAD.

THEY SAID
TO THINK
ABOUT
A SAD
MEMORY,

WHAT
DID THEY
TEACH
YOU AT
ACTING
SCHOOL
?

THAT'S A
PRETTY
COMMON
METHOD.



GRUMBLING ABOUT IT ISN'T GOING TO GET ME ANYWHERE.

I'LL GIVE IT A SHOT.

GUESS SHE'S UP FOR IT.



YOU CAN BE PRETTY BLUNT SOMETIMES, KUSANAGI-SAN.

WHY DON'T YOU THINK ABOUT THE TIME OUR FRIENDS TOTALLY SNUBBED YOU IN HIGH SCHOOL?!

IF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SAD MEMORIES,



LIKE YOU'D HIT ROCK BOT-

UH-OH...

TOO FAR! YOU'RE SCARING ME!



SO SAD AND LONELY ...

YOU WERE SO HURT, WEREN'T YOU?



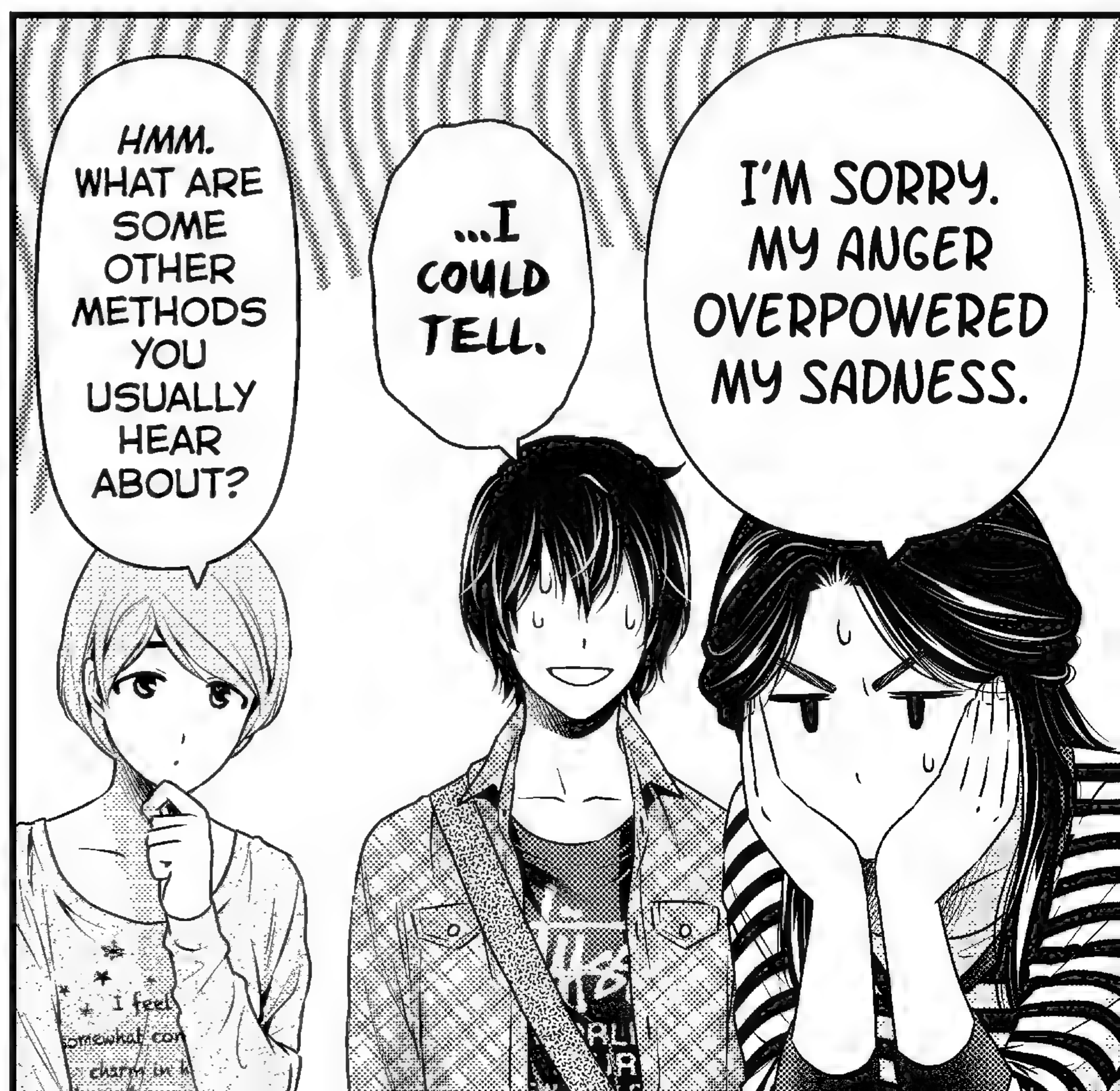
HOW DID YOU FEEL BACK THEN?

NOW, THINK BACK ON THAT TIME.



MY DAD HAS ALLERGIES, SO I'VE NEVER HAD A PET BEFORE.

HOW ABOUT IMAGINING THAT YOUR PET HAS DIED?



HMM. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER METHODS YOU USUALLY HEAR ABOUT?

...I COULD TELL.

I'M SORRY. MY ANGER OVERPOWERED MY SADNESS.

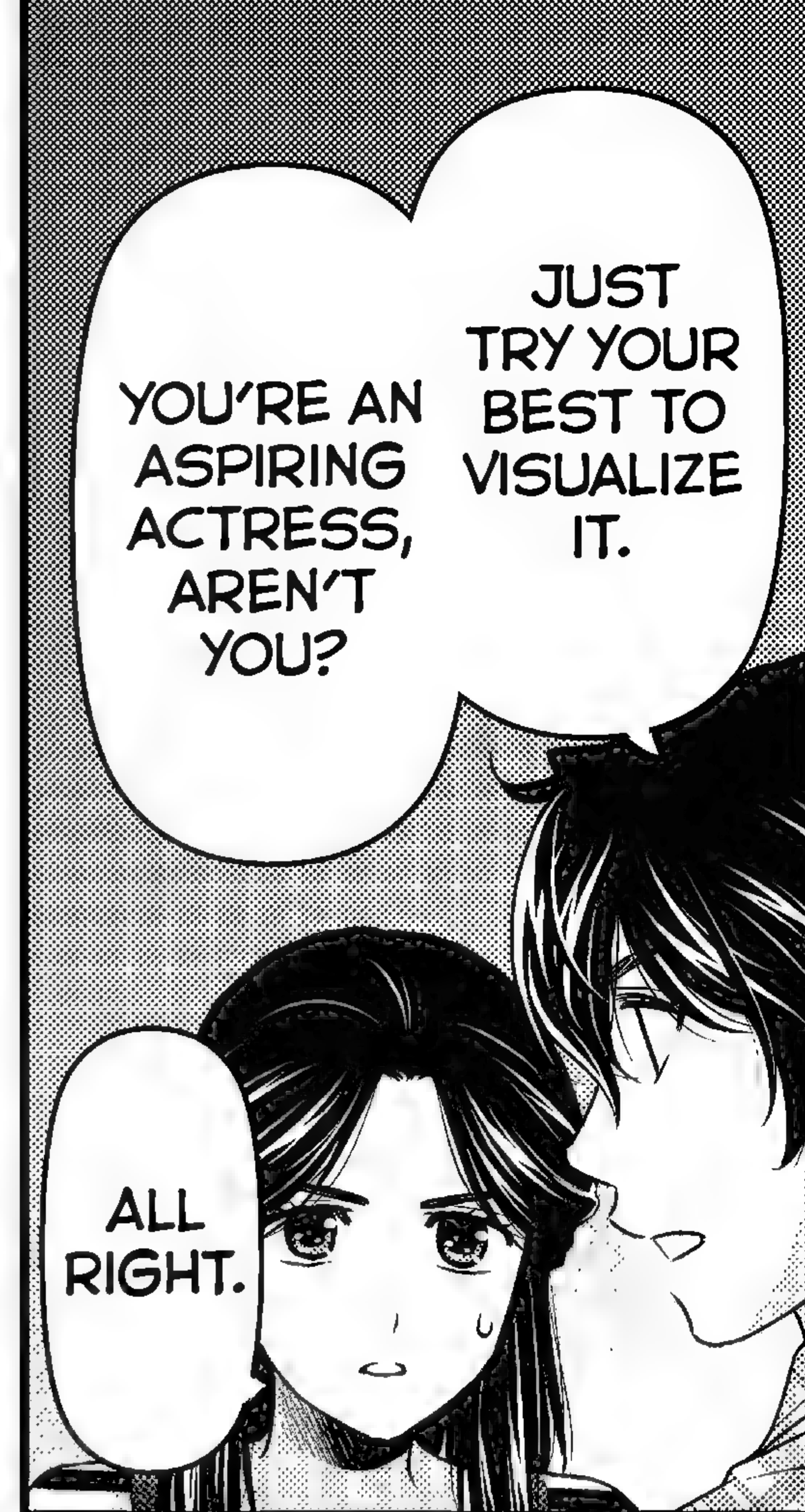


ER...

THIS
MIGHT
TAKE A
WHILE.

THEN I'LL
START
FROM WHEN
I FIRST GET
THE PET...

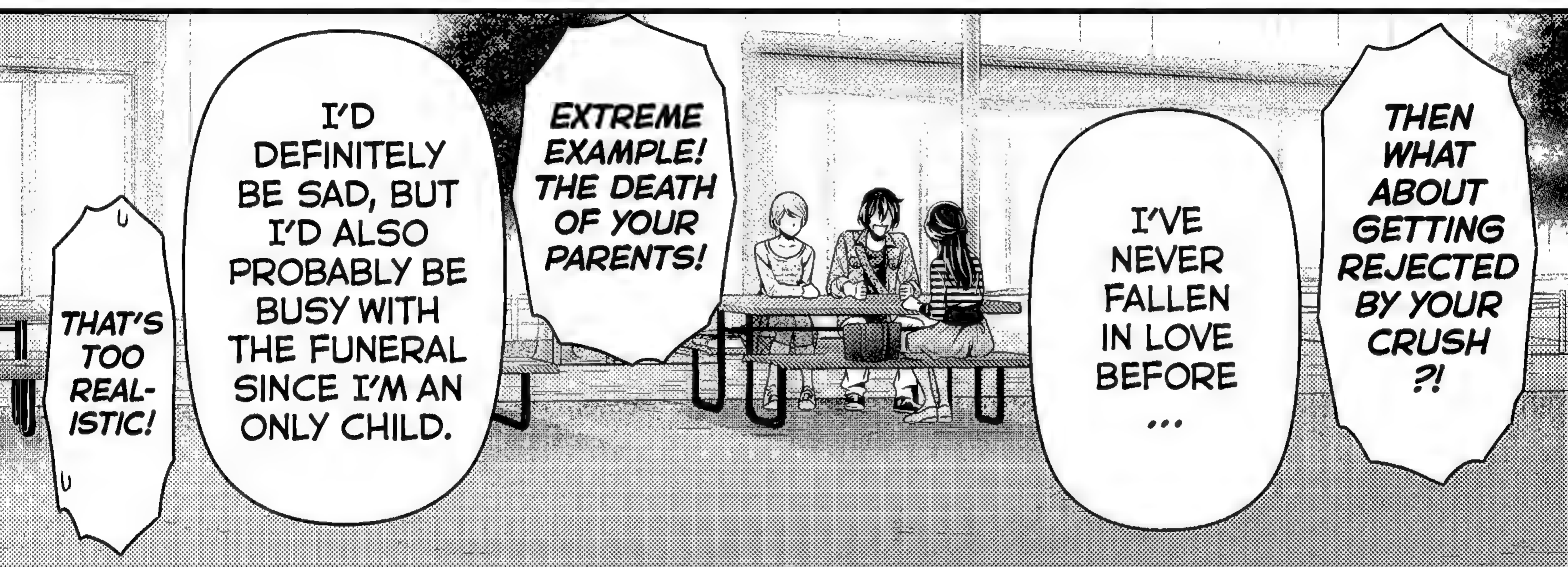
I GUESS ASKING
HER TO IMAGINE
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO
EVEN HAVE A PET
TO LOSE MIGHT
BE A BIT MUCH.



YOU'RE AN
ASPIRING
ACTRESS,
AREN'T
YOU?

JUST
TRY YOUR
BEST TO
VISUALIZE
IT.

ALL
RIGHT.



THAT'S
TOO
REAL-
ISTIC!

I'D
DEFINITELY
BE SAD, BUT
I'D ALSO
PROBABLY BE
BUSY WITH
THE FUNERAL
SINCE I'M AN
ONLY CHILD.

EXTREME
EXAMPLE!
THE DEATH
OF YOUR
PARENTS!

I'VE
NEVER
FALLEN
IN LOVE
BEFORE
...

THEN
WHAT
ABOUT
GETTING
REJECTED
BY YOUR
CRUSH
?!



I'LL SEE IF
I CAN FIND
SOME MORE
EFFECTIVE
METHODS.

BUT LET'S
KEEP AT IT
UNTIL SHOW
NIGHT.

WE MIGHT
NOT HAVE
GOTTEN
ANYWHERE
TODAY,

WELL,

OKAY.







I'M REALLY
JEALOUS OF
THOSE CHILD
ACTORS ON TV
WHO CAN
CRY ON CUE.



...FOR
SOME
REASON,
THE TEARS
JUST WON'T
COME.

I CAN
GET INTO
CHARACTER
SO I LOOK
AND SOUND
SAD, BUT...



...YOU
USED TO
BARELY
SAY A
WORD.

IT'S JUST,
WHENEVER I
ASKED YOU
HOW THINGS
WERE GOING
AT ACTING
SCHOOL...



IS THERE
SOME-
THING ON
MY FACE?

WHAT
?

IF I
COULD
ONLY...

OH,
SORRY.



YOUR
NEW CLUB
MUST BE
A LOT OF
FUN.



IT'S NICE TO
HEAR YOU
TALK SO
ENTHUSIAS-
TICALLY FOR
A CHANGE.



I...

...
GUESS
SO.

NATSUO

We're almost done with rehearsals.
Think you can take a night off work?
It'd be great if you guys can come
see the show. Just lemme know
and I can get tickets for everyone.



WHAT'S
UP?

DO YOU
HAVE THE
16TH, 17TH,
OR 18TH
OFF THIS
MONTH?



GOT A
SEC?



KNOCK

KNOCK



UM...
YOU KNOW
HOW
NATSUO'S
IN THE
DRAMA
CLUB?

REAL-
LY?

UHH...
I THINK I
HAVE THE
16TH OFF.

YEAH.



...YOU
WANT
ME TO
COME?

ARE
YOU
SURE
...

HUH
?

WELL,
YEAH
...



THEY HAVE
AN AMATEUR
PERFOR-
MANCE
COMING UP.

DO YOU
WANNA
GO SEE IT
WITH ME?



YOU BET
I DO!

OKAY.
I'LL TELL
HIM TO GET
TICKETS
...

AAH!
THANK
YOU SO
MUCH,
RUI!

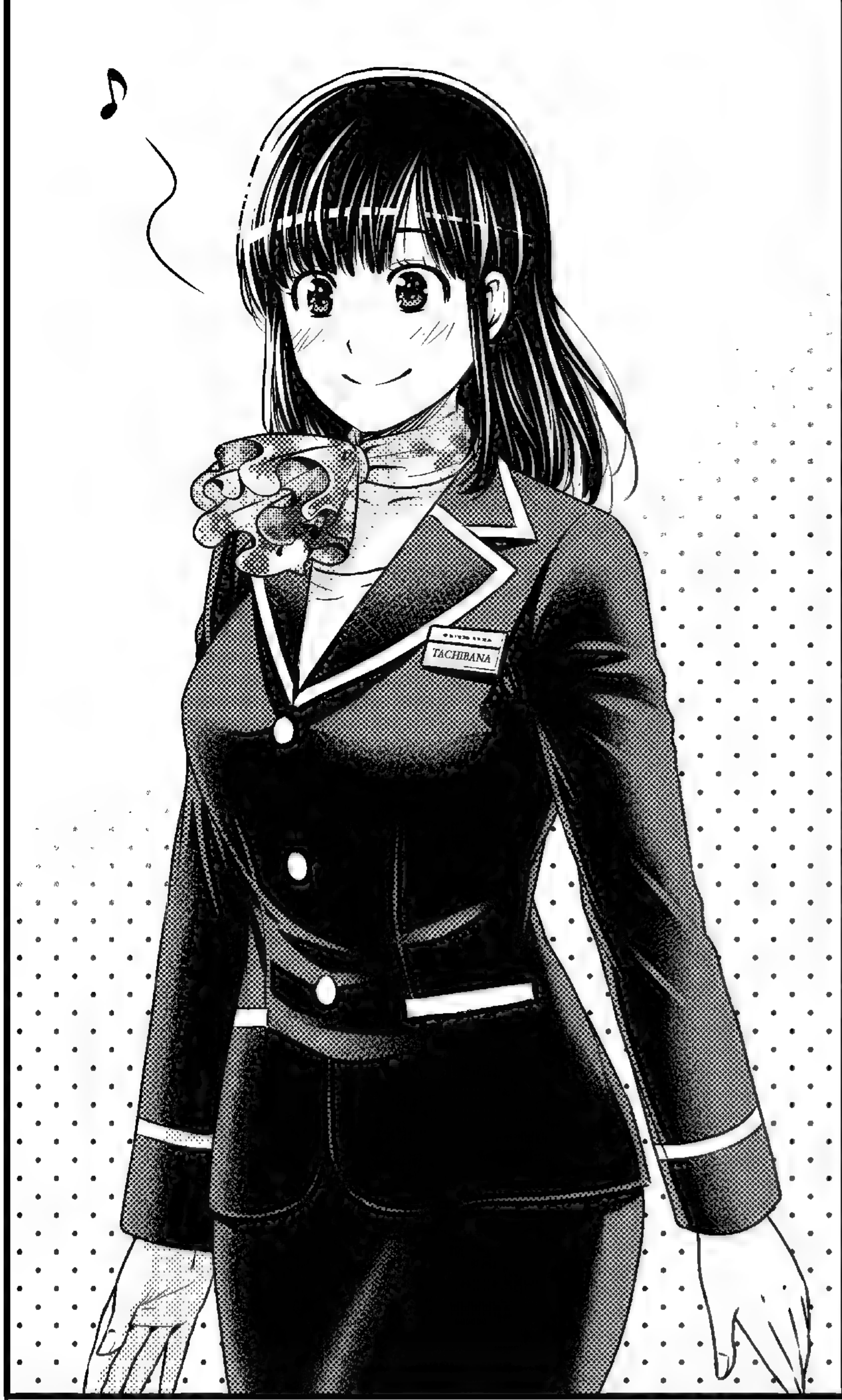
I LOVE
YOU!



FWAP



IF YOU
WANT TO,
ANYWAY.



HELLO.
YOU'VE
REACHED
THE FRONT
DESK.

YES.

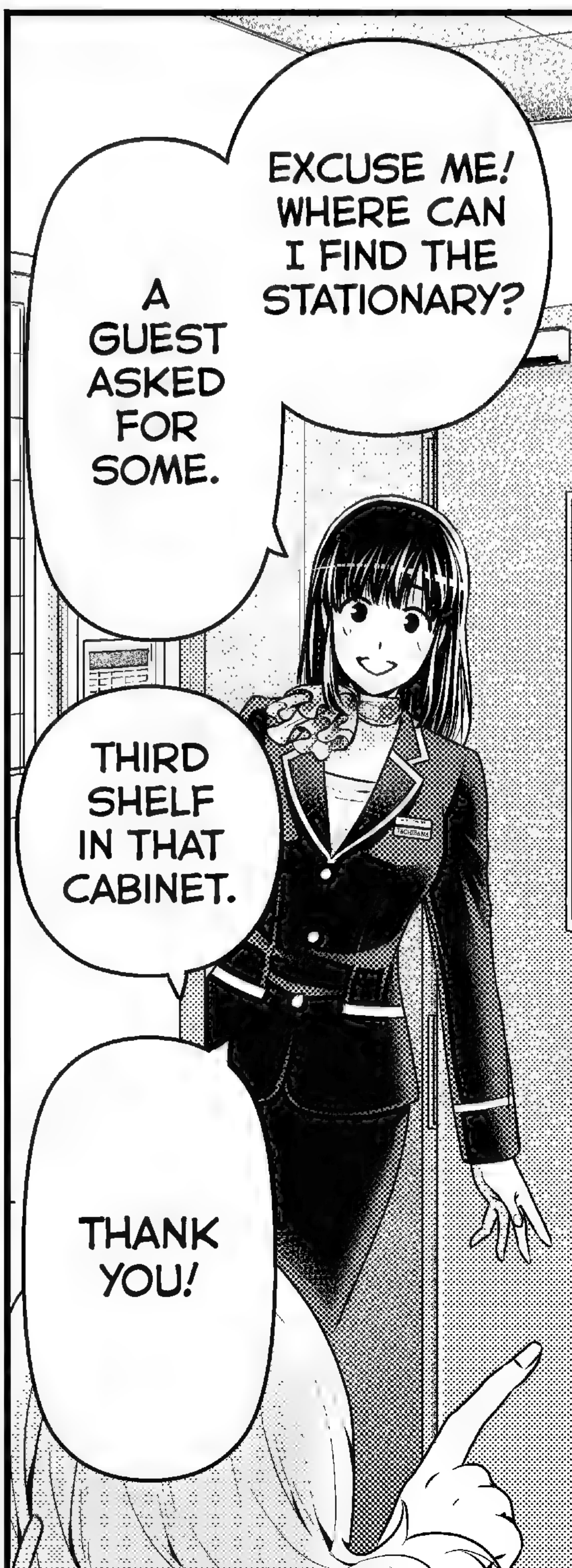
YES, I
CAN GET
THAT
FOR YOU
RIGHT
AWAY.



YOU
SEEM
AWFULLY
CHIPPER
TODAY.

WHAT'S
UP,
TACHI-
BANA-
CHAN?

DID
SOME-
THING
GOOD
HAPPEN?



EXCUSE ME!
WHERE CAN
I FIND THE
STATIONARY?

A
GUEST
ASKED
FOR
SOME.

THIRD
SHELF
IN THAT
CABINET.

THANK
YOU!



...MY LITTLE
SISTER AND I
ARE GOING TO
SEE MY STEP-
BROTHER'S
NEW PLAY!

LATER
THIS
MONTH...

A PLAY,
HUH?

SO...
YOU JUST
TOLD US
ANYWAY.



HEE,
HEE.

DO YOU
REALLY
WANNA
KNOW?

DO,
HO,
HO,
HO.

ACTUALLY,
FORGET I
ASKED.



OOH,
I CAN'T
WAIT!

VERY!

YOU
THREE
MUST BE
CLOSE.

THAT'S
WHY
YOU'RE
SO
HAPPY?



BUT
...

...I JUST
CAN'T
HELP BUT
SMILE.



UH-OH.

I HAVE TO
FOCUS
WHILE I'M
AT WORK!



BUT YOU
SHOULDN'T
KEEP THE
GUEST
WAITING!

IT'S
GREAT
TO BE
EXCITED
AND
ALL,

OH,
YEAH!

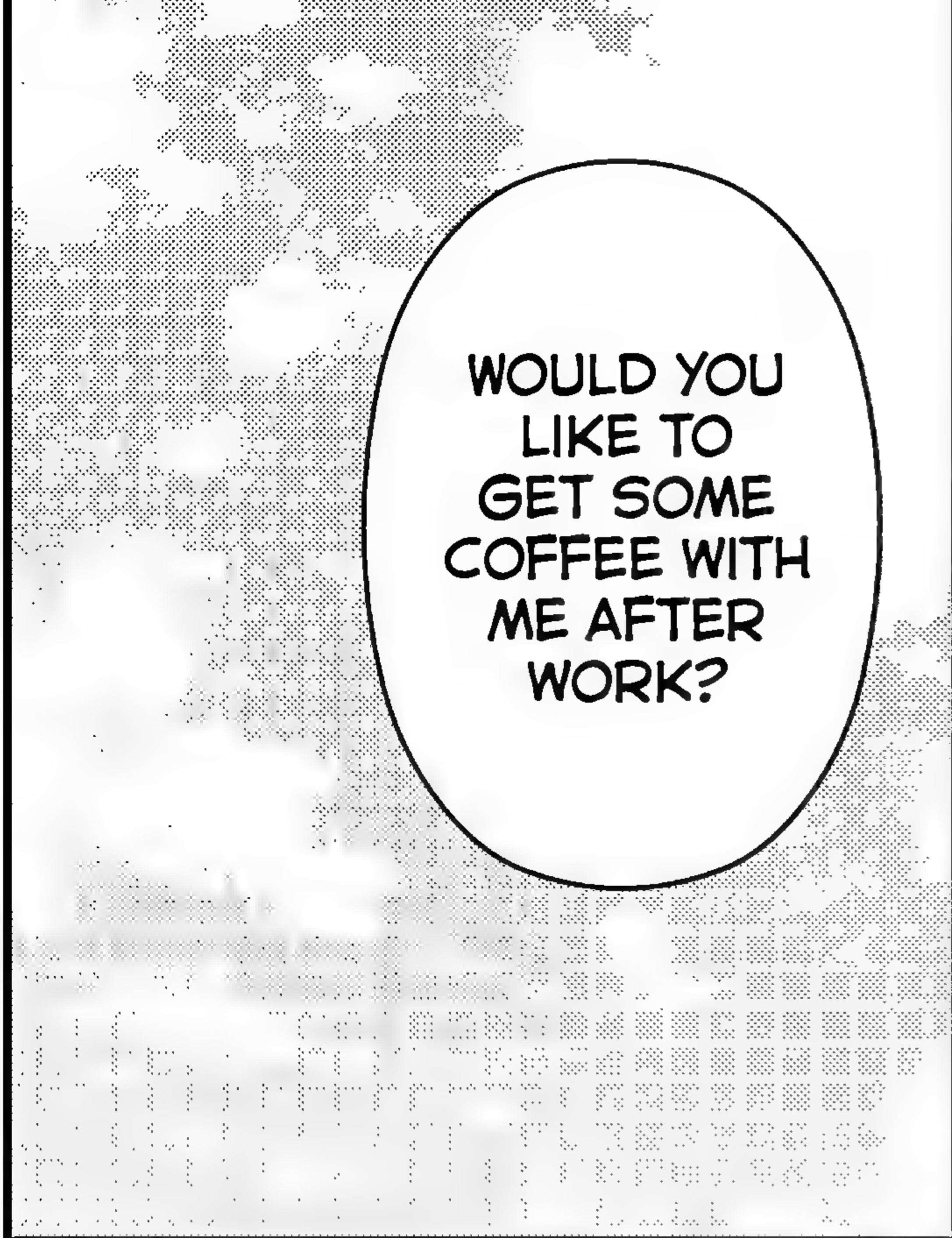


YOUR MOTHER'S TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOU.

IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.
MY NAME IS KENGO TANABE.

CHAPTER 157: FEELINGS SET IN MOTION





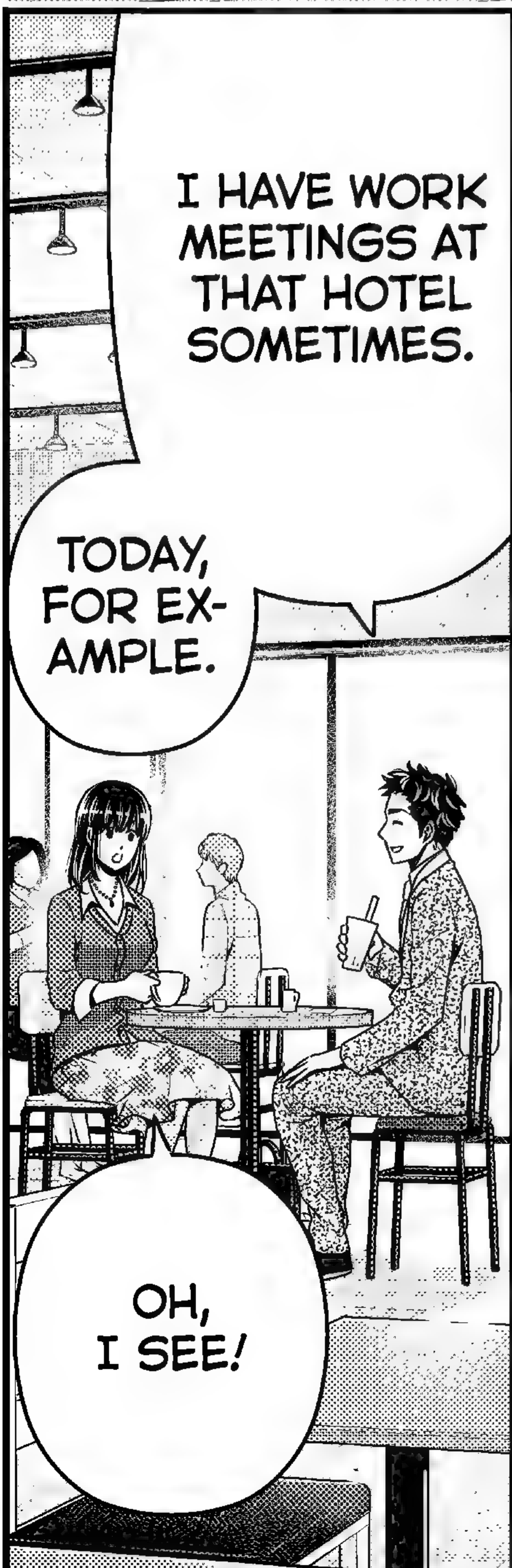
WOULD YOU
LIKE TO
GET SOME
COFFEE WITH
ME AFTER
WORK?



UM...
I THINK MY
SHIFT ENDS
AT SIX.

MAY I
ASK
WHEN
YOU GET
OFF TO-
NIGHT?

REALLY?
I GET OFF
AROUND
THE SAME
TIME.



I HAVE WORK
MEETINGS AT
THAT HOTEL
SOMETIMES.

TODAY,
FOR EX-
AMPLE.

OH,
I SEE!



IT'S
OKAY.

I WAS
JUST A
LITTLE
SUR-
PRISED.

HA, HA.
WELL, I DID
KIND OF
SHOW UP
OUT OF
NOWHERE.



SORRY
AGAIN...

...FOR
BOTHERING
YOU AT
WORK.



YOU
LIKE TO
DRINK?

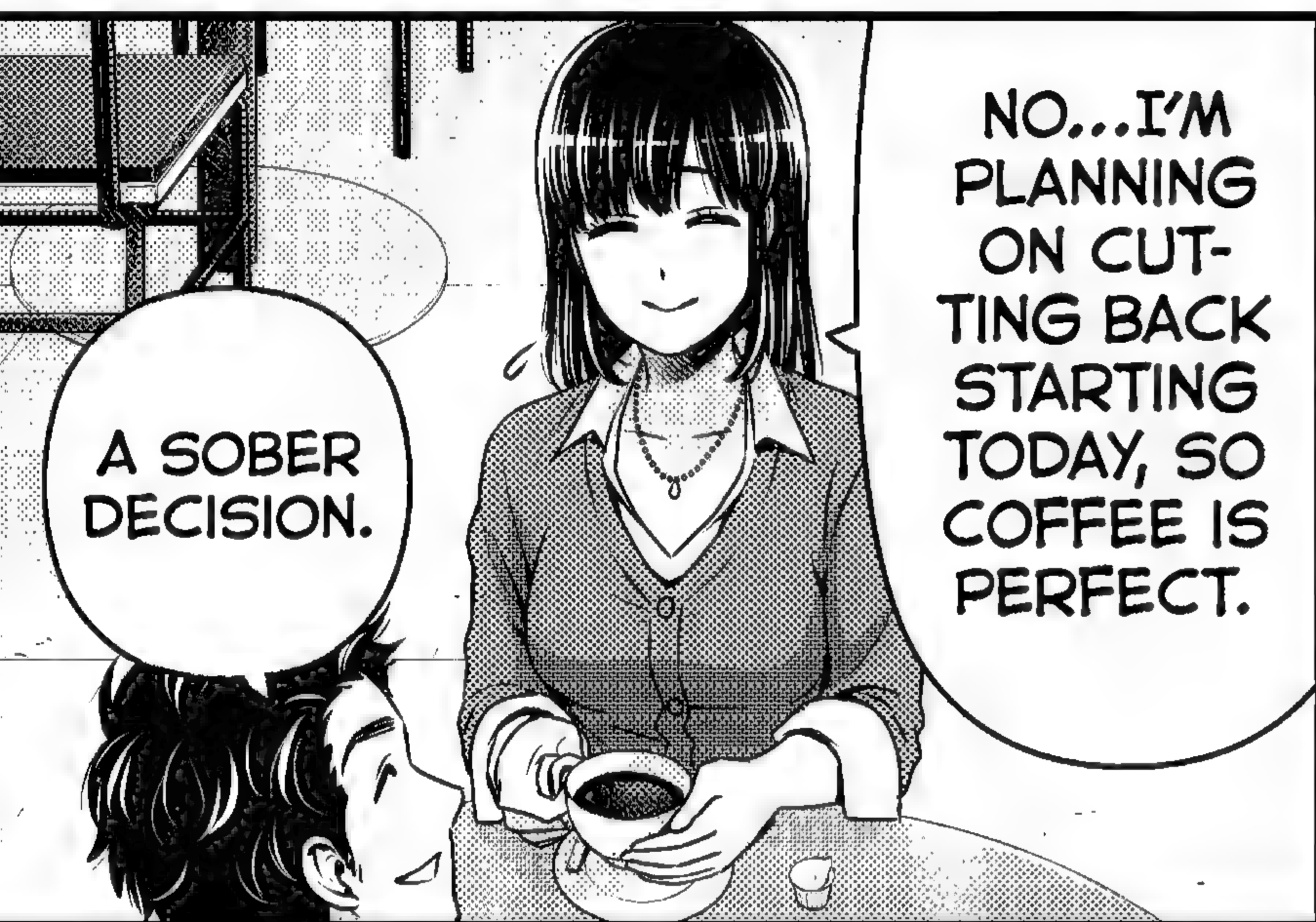
THAT'S
WHAT I GET
FOR BEING
CARELESS.
I'LL HAVE TO
SWEAR OFF
ALCOHOL
AGAIN FOR
A WHILE AND
GET BACK IN
THE ZONE.



NO, I'VE
ACTUALLY
BEEN BETTER
ABOUT IT
LATELY...

YOU
DEFINITELY
SPILLED
EVERYTHING
WITH FLAIR.
ARE YOU
USUALLY
THAT
CLUMSY?

I MADE A
PRETTY
BIG FOOL
OF MYSELF
TODAY...



A SOBER
DECISION.

NO...I'M
PLANNING
ON CUT-
TING BACK
STARTING
TODAY, SO
COFFEE IS
PERFECT.



MAYBE WE
SHOULD'VE
GONE TO
A BAR
INSTEAD.

I'M A
PRETTY
BIG
DRINKER,
TOO.



PHEW.
TIME
FLIES!



LOTS OF
THINGS,
BUT LATELY
I'M REALLY
INTO
WHISKEY.

WHAT
DO YOU
LIKE TO
DRINK?

ME, TOO!
I LIKE MINE
ON THE
ROCKS WITH
A LITTLE
WATER...



I DIDN'T WANT THINGS TO GET AWKWARD BETWEEN OUR PARENTS IF WE DIDN'T GET ALONG.

TO BE HONEST, I WAS A LITTLE RELUCTANT WHEN MY FATHER BROUGHT UP THE IDEA.



I DIDN'T THINK WE'D HIT IT OFF SO WELL.

SORRY TO KEEP YOU FOR SO LONG.

IT'S FINE.



WE SHOULD GET DINNER SOME-TIME!

MAY I ASK FOR YOUR LINE ID?



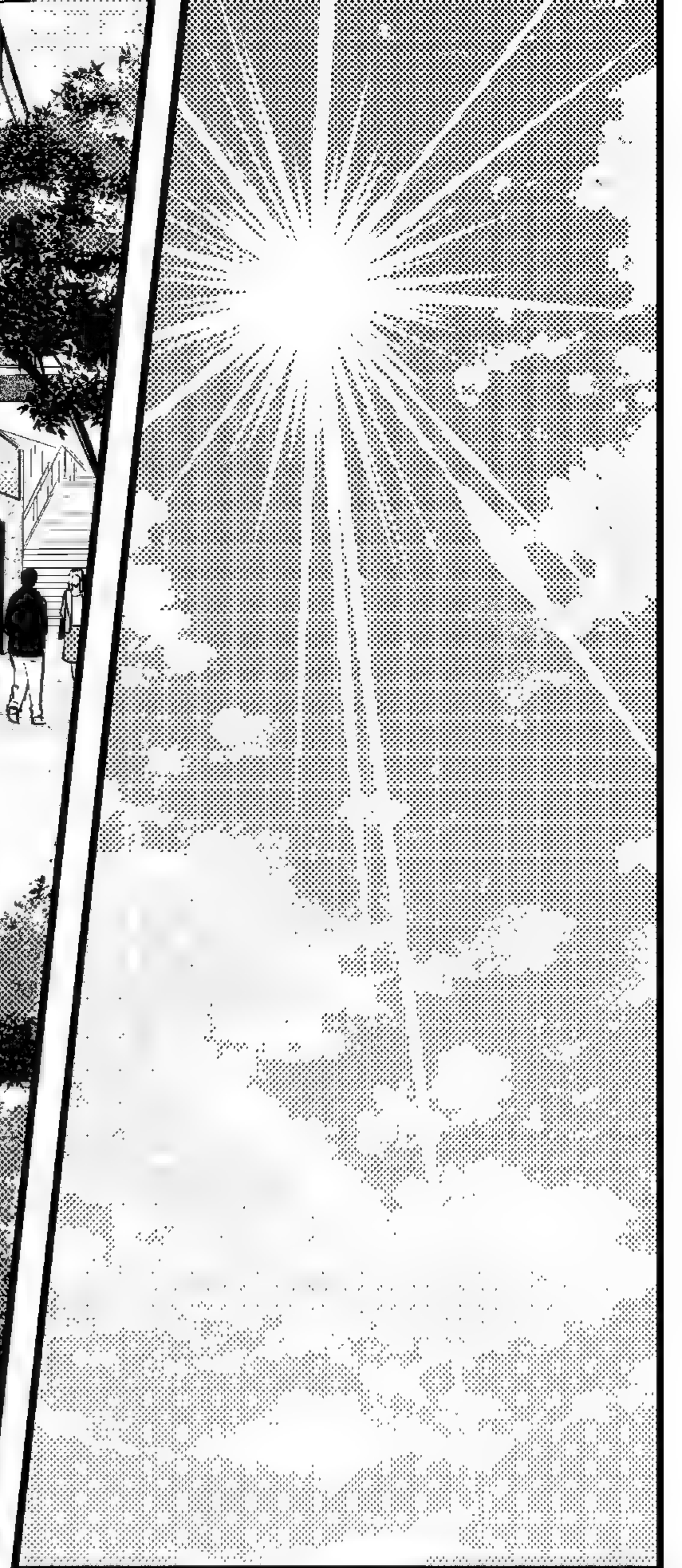
I DIDN'T SAY MUCH ONE WAY OR AN-OTHER,

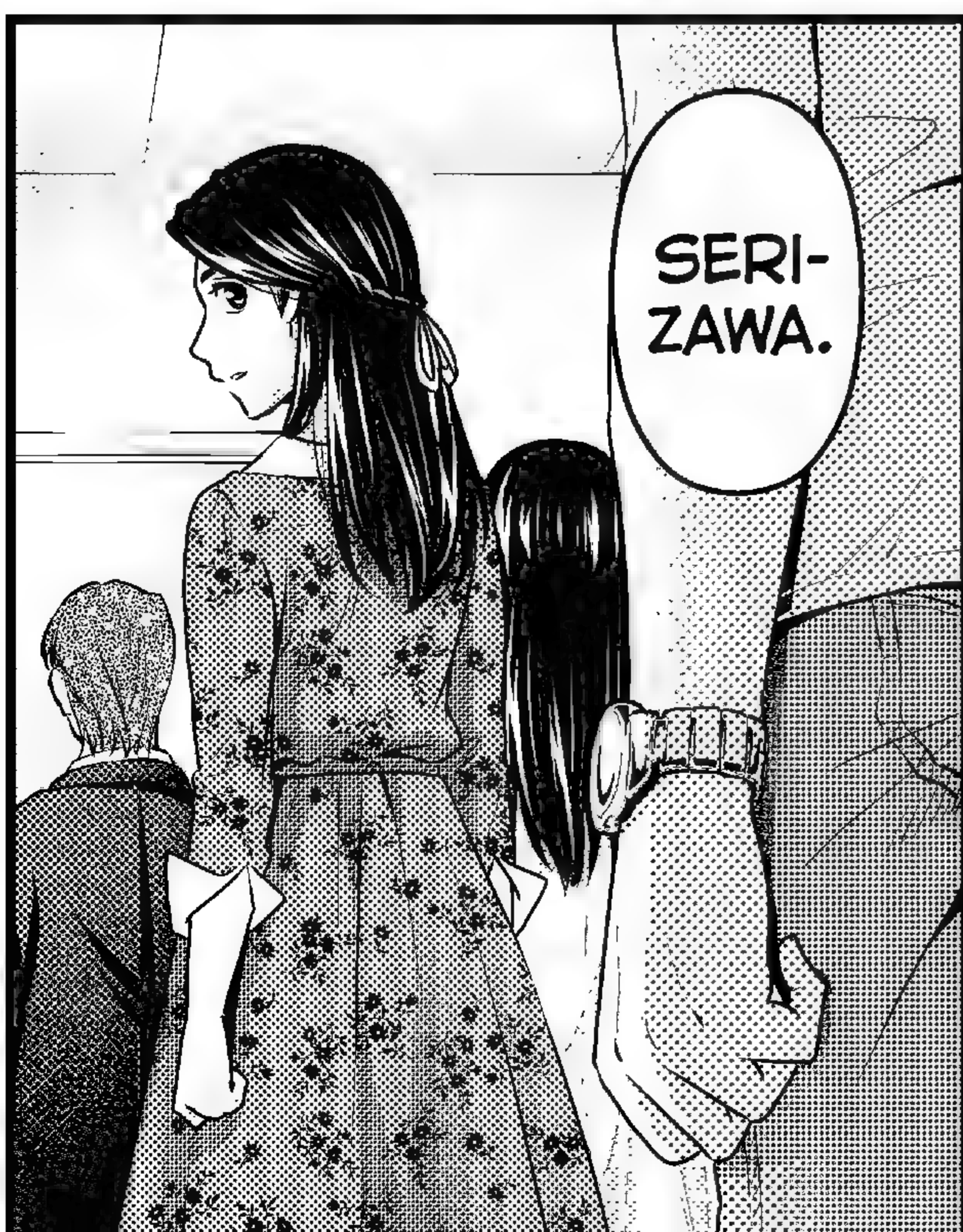
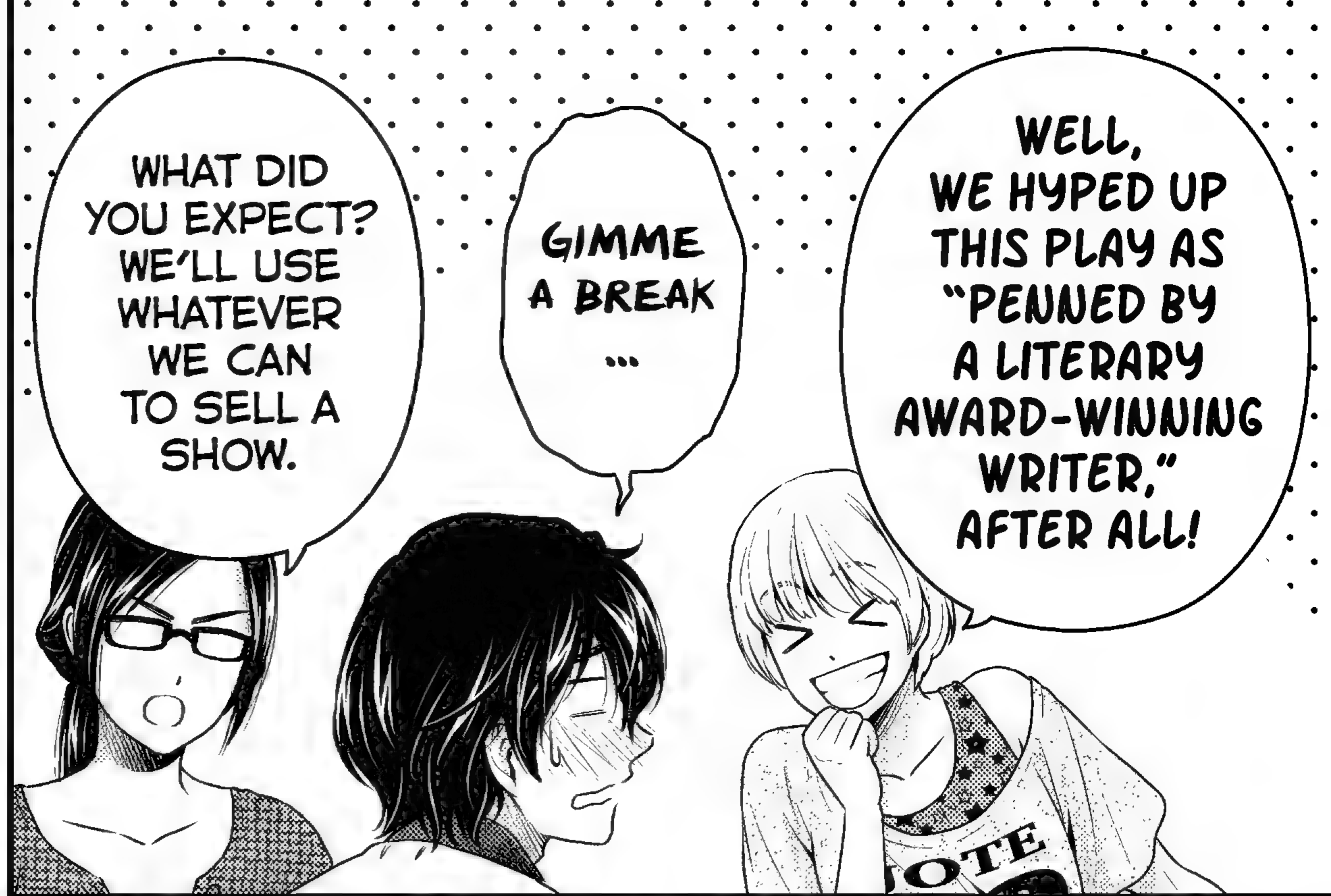
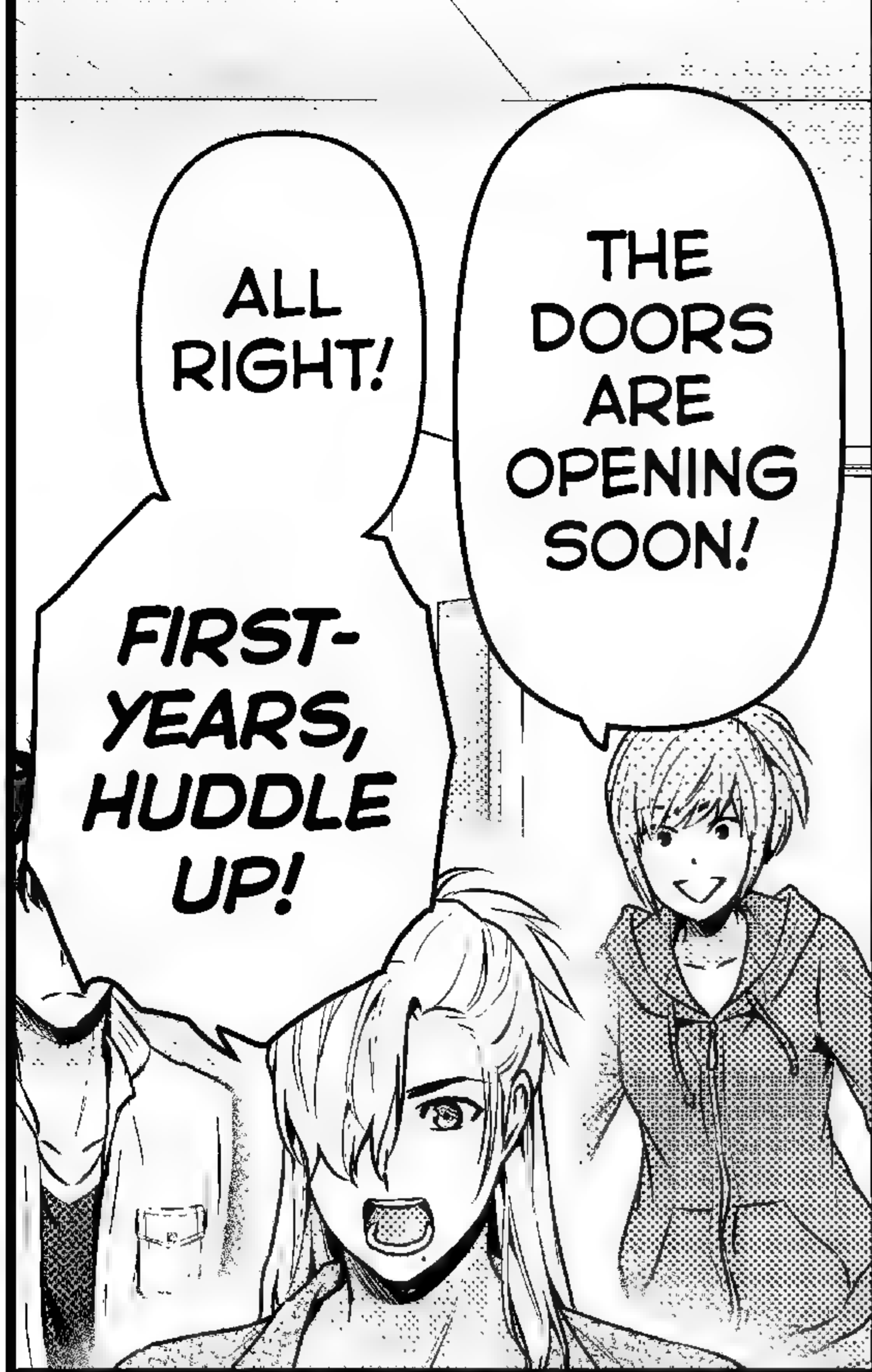
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE MOM WENT AHEAD AND MOVED THINGS ALONG.



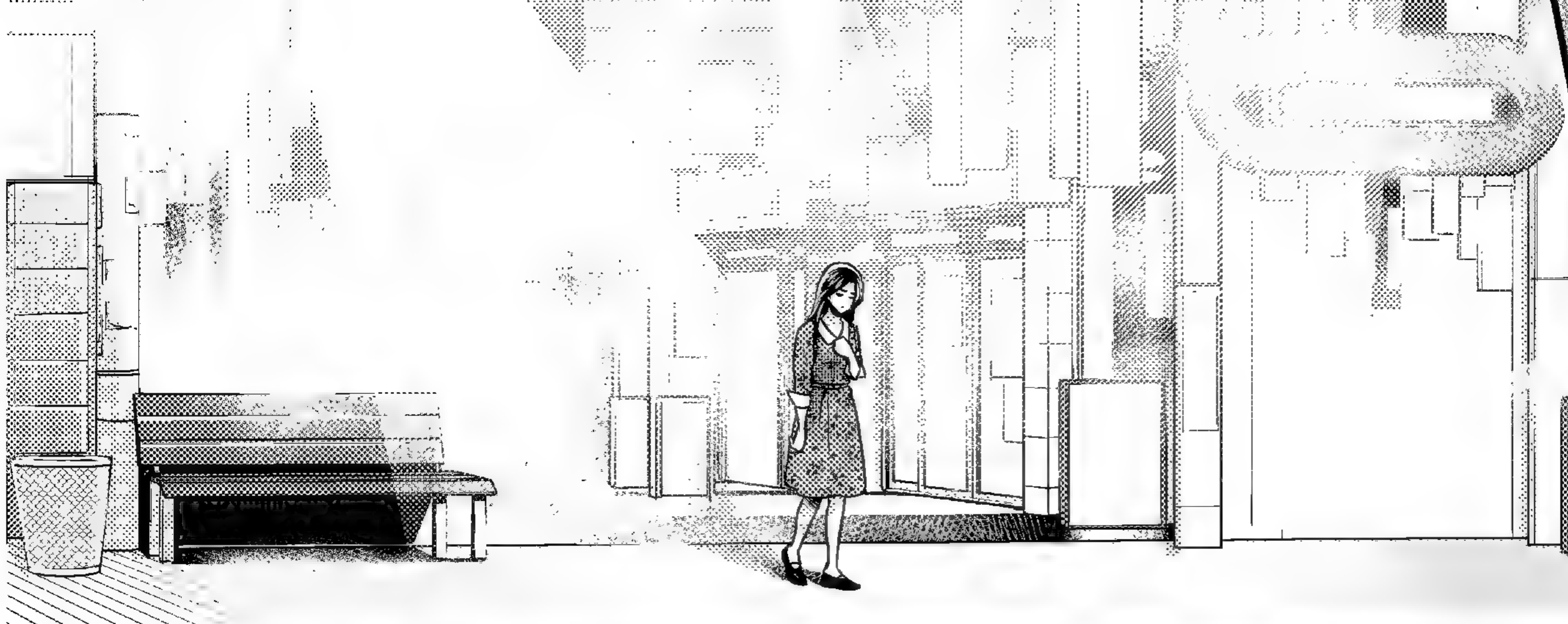
BUT I'M GLAD I MET YOU!

I HAD A LOT MORE FUN TONIGHT THAN I EXPECTED TO!

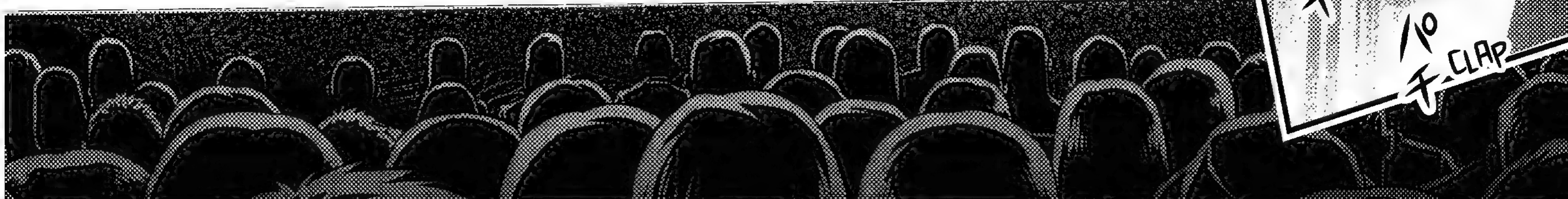








10 CLAP
10 CLAP
10 CLAP
10 CLAP



BUT...
...THIS IS ALL I HAVE LEFT.



I JUST CAN'T DECIDE.



UGH... IT'S NO USE.



BUT HE'S SPEAKING A LITTLE FAST. HE MIGHT BE NERVOUS.

YEAH.

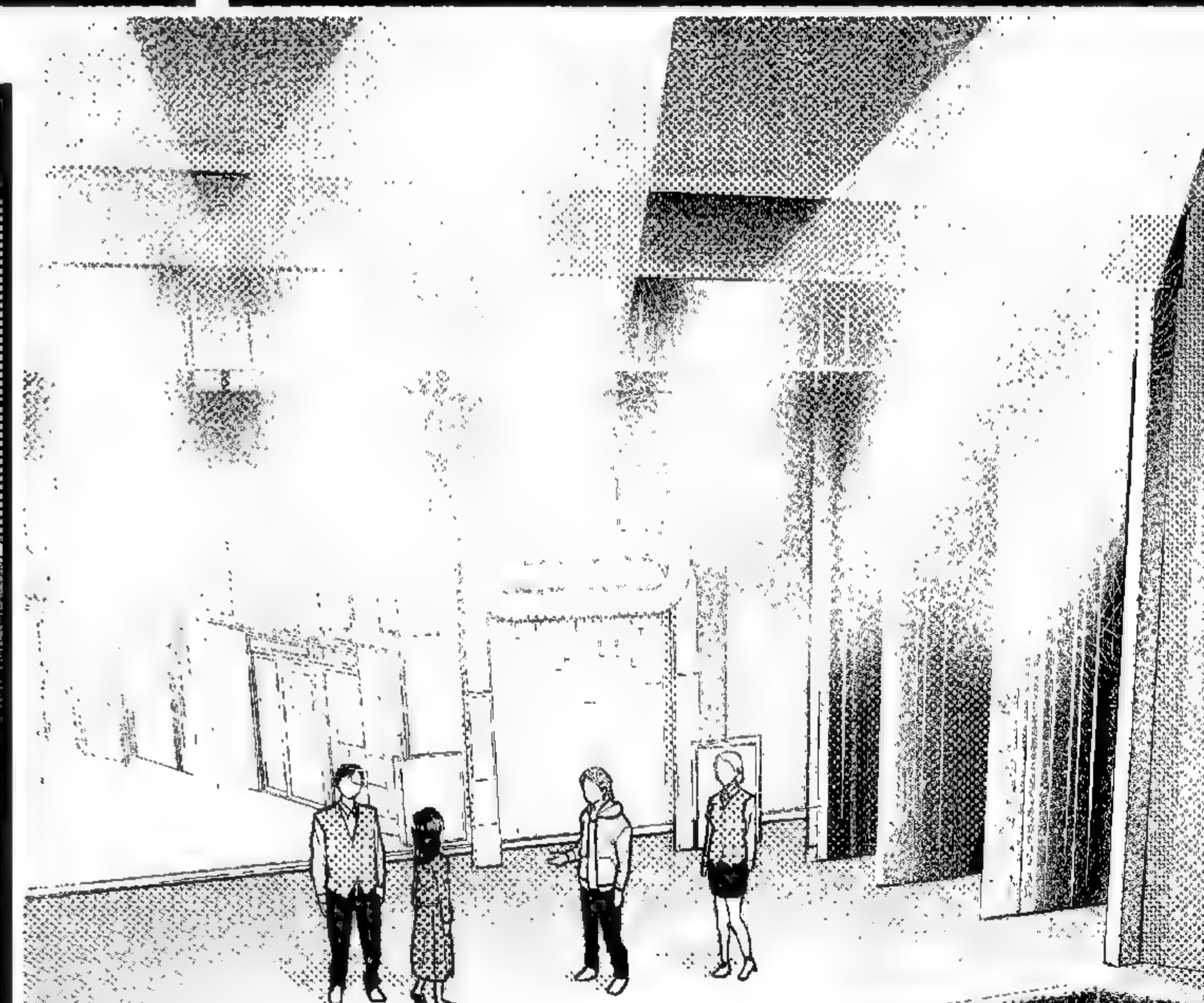
THE AUDIENCE SEEMS INTO IT SO FAR.

あはは
あはは
あはは

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

WHO'RE YOU CALLING A STALLION? DO I LOOK LIKE ROCKY TO YOU?

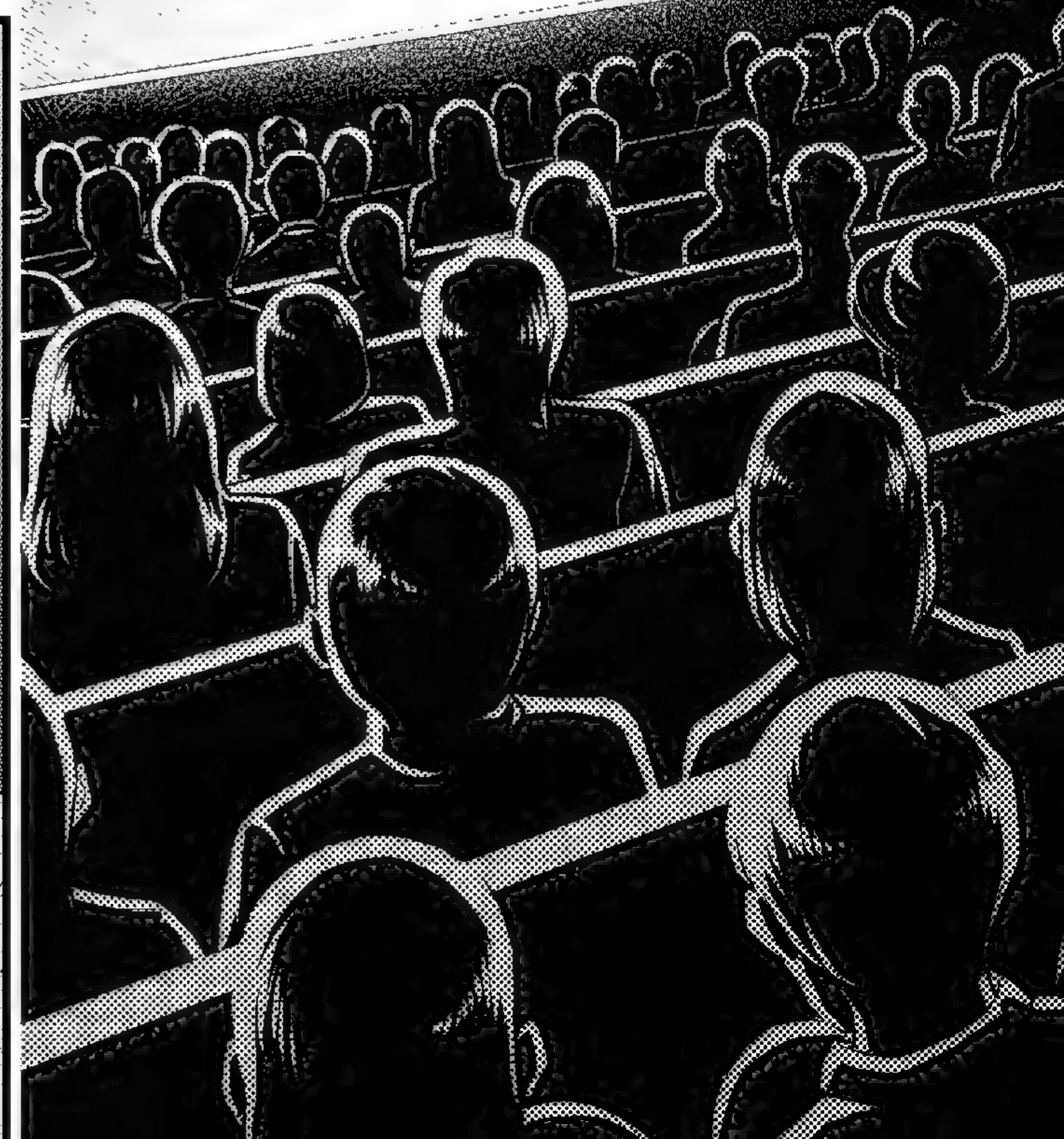
ははは
ははは
ははは



I'VE FELT THIS WAY FOR A LONG TIME.

TO ME, YOU'RE LIKE...

IF HE DOESN'T WATCH HOW HE SAYS HIS LINES...





SOMEONE
MAKE A
CUE CARD,
QUICK!



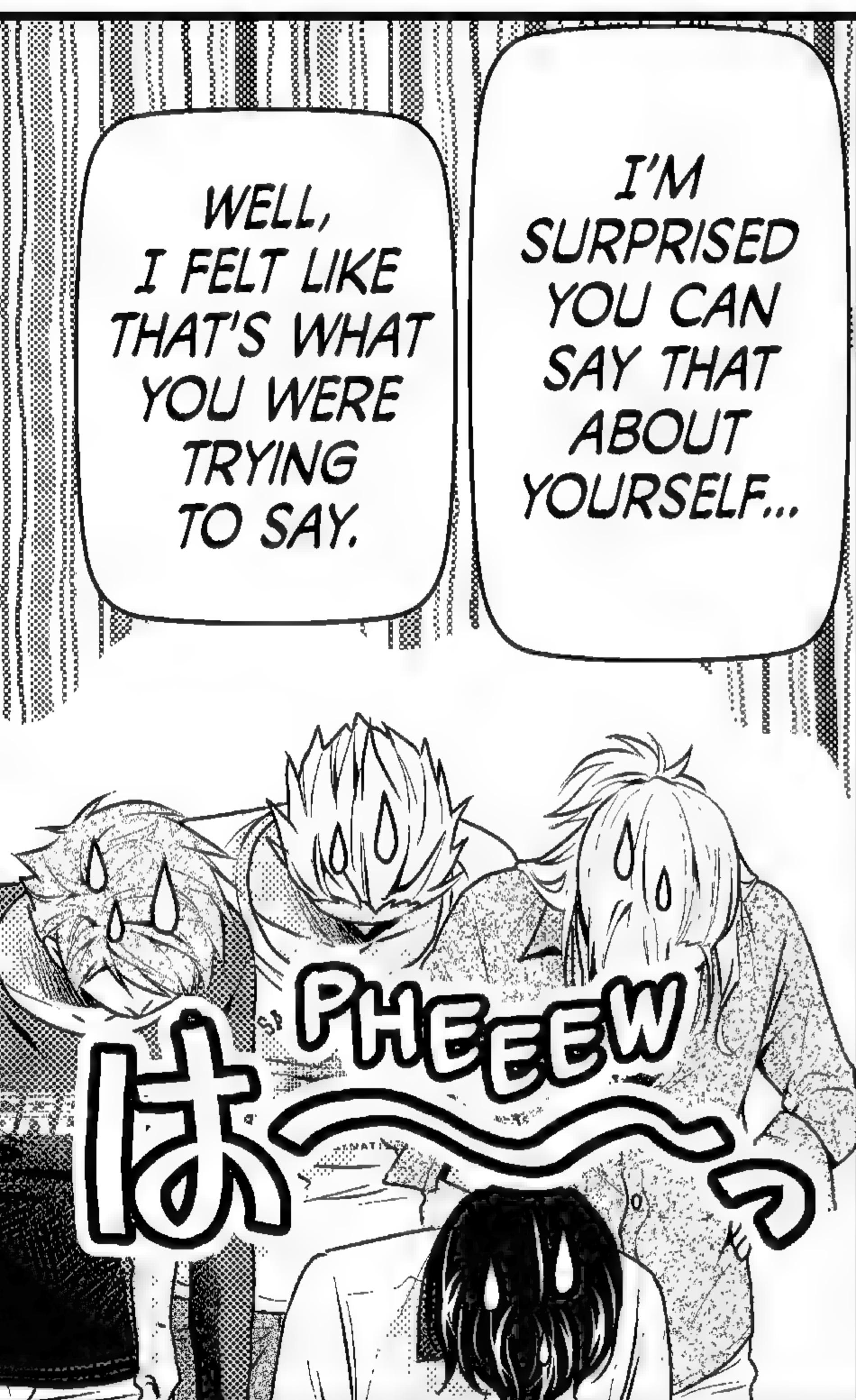
SERI-
OUS-
LY?!

HE
FORGOT
HIS
LINE?!

IT WAS
GOING SO
SMOOTHLY,
TOO.



LIKE...



WELL,
I FELT LIKE
THAT'S WHAT
YOU WERE
TRYING
TO SAY.

I'M
SURPRISED
YOU CAN
SAY THAT
ABOUT
YOURSELF...



YEAH!

EXACT-
LY!



LIKE A
JEWEL IN
A GLASS
CASE?



W
H
A
T
?!

HEY, GUYS!
THE GUN
PROP'S
MISSING!



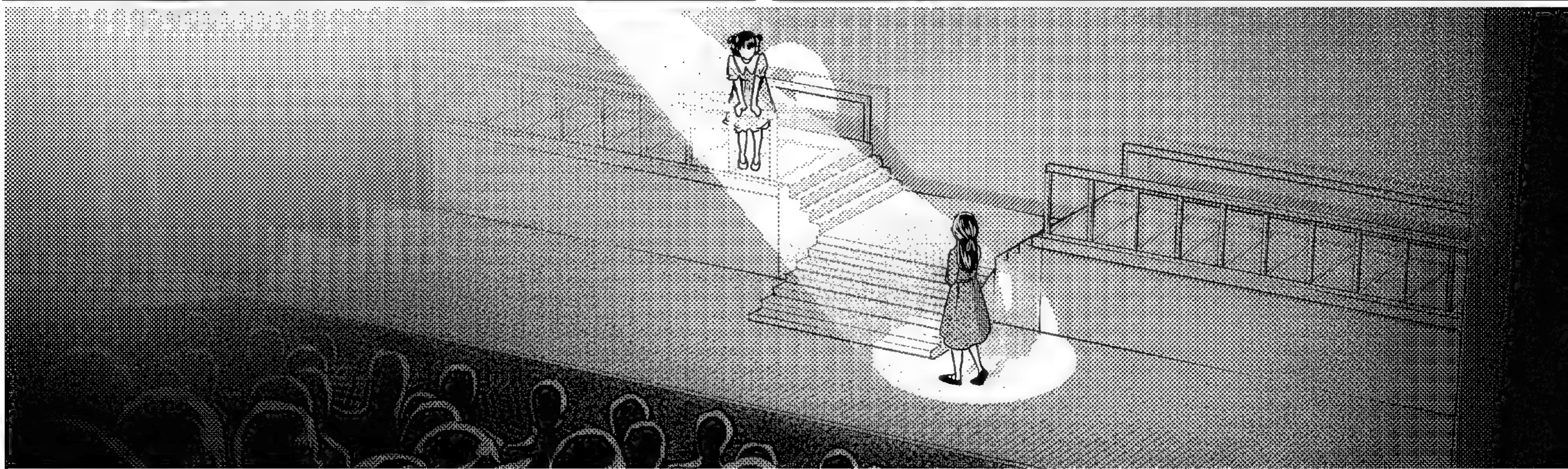
GOOD
THING SHE
MEMORIZED
HIS LINES,
TOO.

THEY
MANAGED
TO ADLIB
THROUGH
IT.

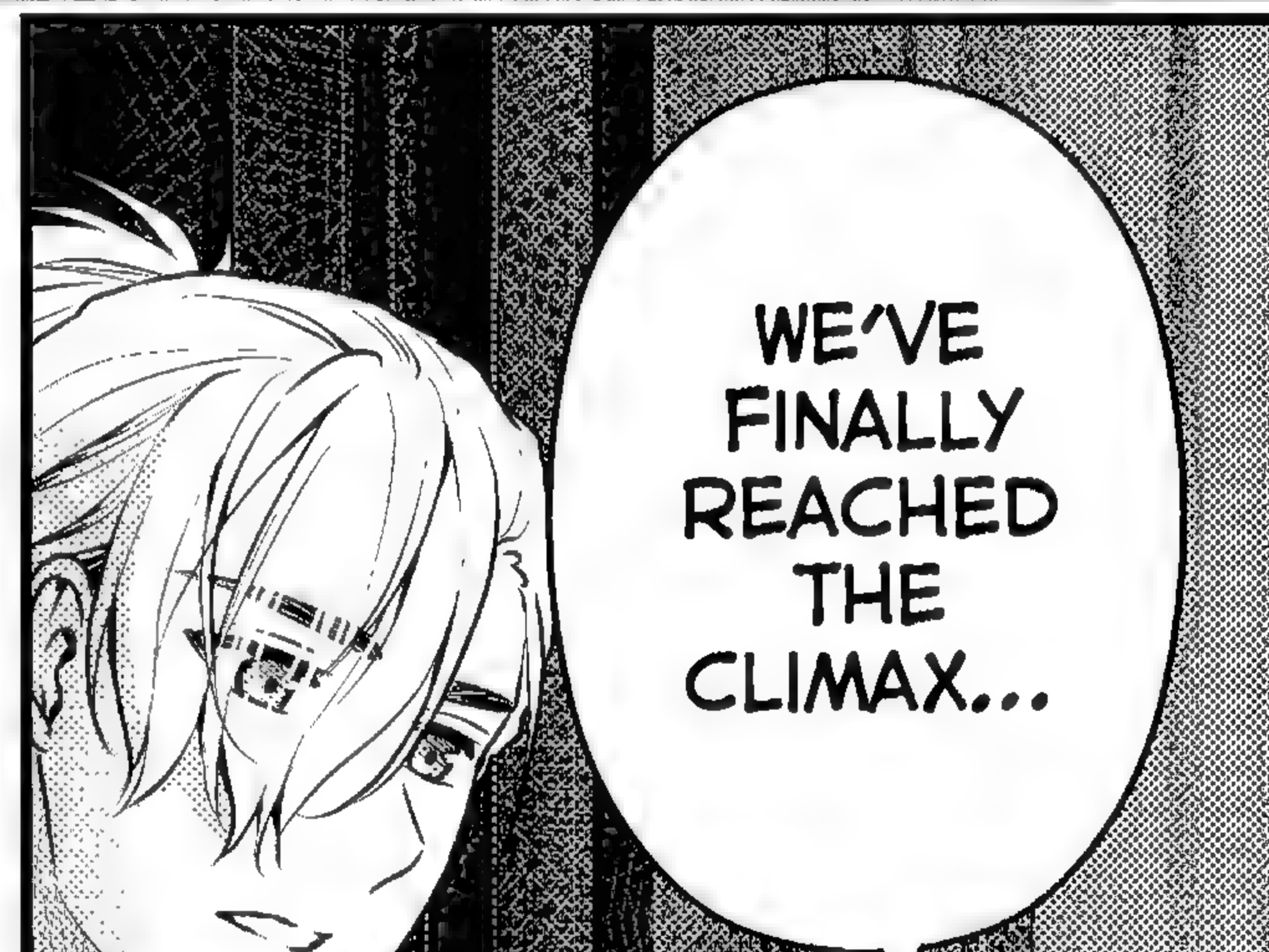
THAT'S
SERIZAWA
FOR YA...



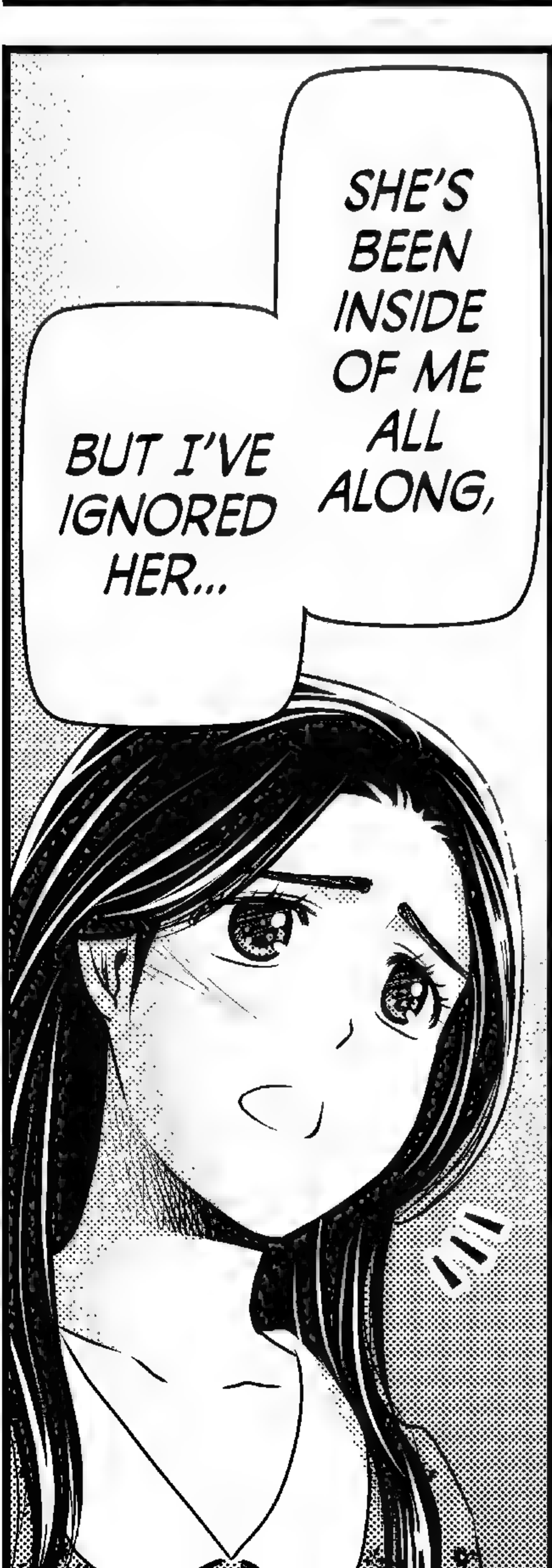
SIGN: EHIME MANDARINS



IT SHOULD
BE SMOOTH
SAILING
FROM HERE.

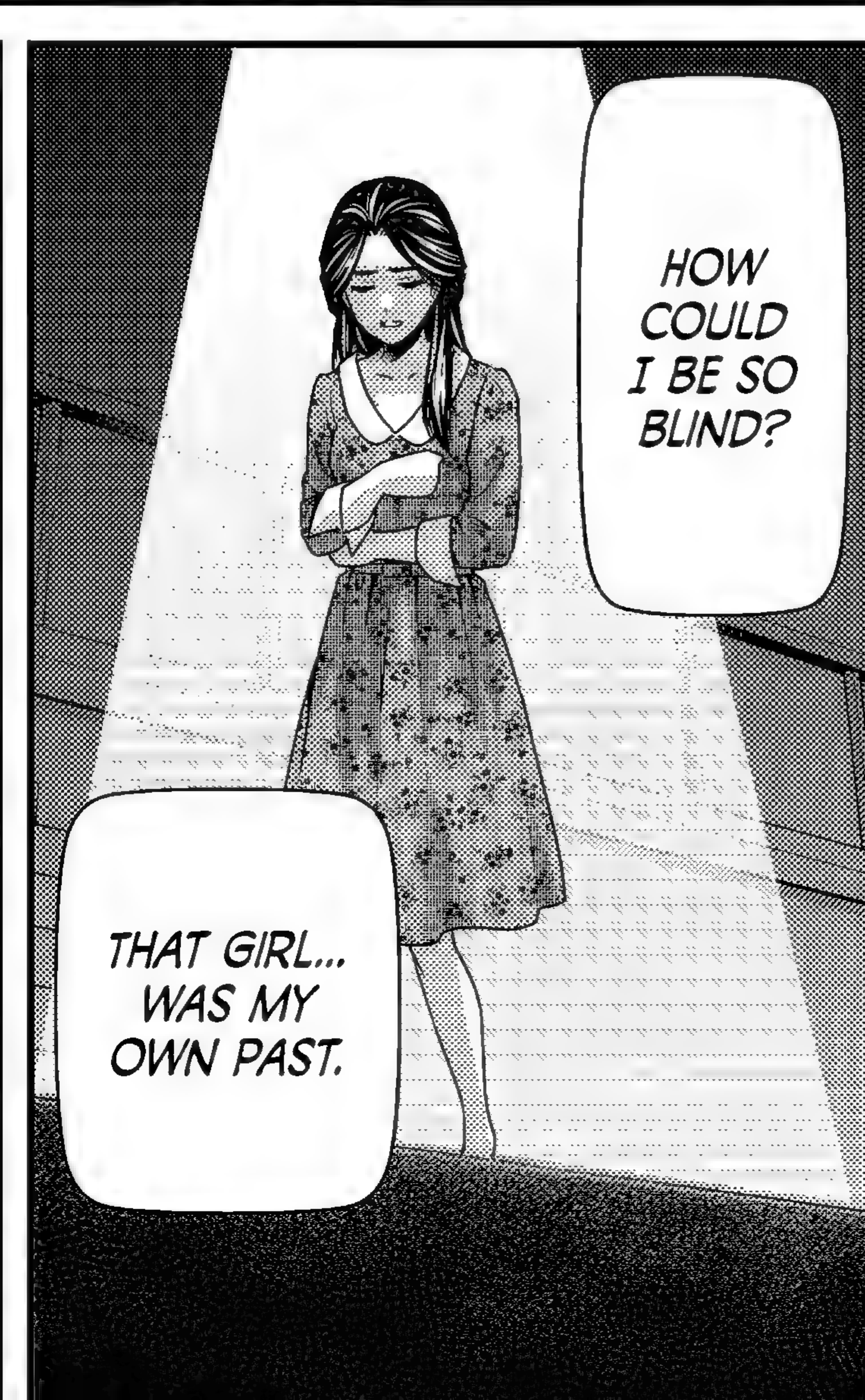


WE'VE
FINALLY
REACHED
THE
CLIMAX...



BUT I'VE
IGNORED
HER...

SHE'S
BEEN
INSIDE
OF ME
ALL
ALONG,



HOW
COULD
I BE SO
BLIND?

THAT GIRL...
WAS MY
OWN PAST.



ALL
THAT'S
LEFT IS
SERI-
ZAWA'S
SCENE.

WHATEVER
PATH I
CHOOSE, I'LL
MAKE THAT
INTO THE
RIGHT ONE!

I WAS
WRONG.
THERE
IS A
CORRECT
PATH.

...IN
SEARCH
OF A
RIGHT
ANSWER.

LET'S
DO
THEATER,
TOO!

IT'LL
BE
GREAT!

I WANTED
TO MAKE
PEOPLE
FEEL...

I'M ALL
RIGHT
NOW.

SERIZAWA
OF ALL
PEOPLE?
NO WAY.

THAT
CAN'T
BE.

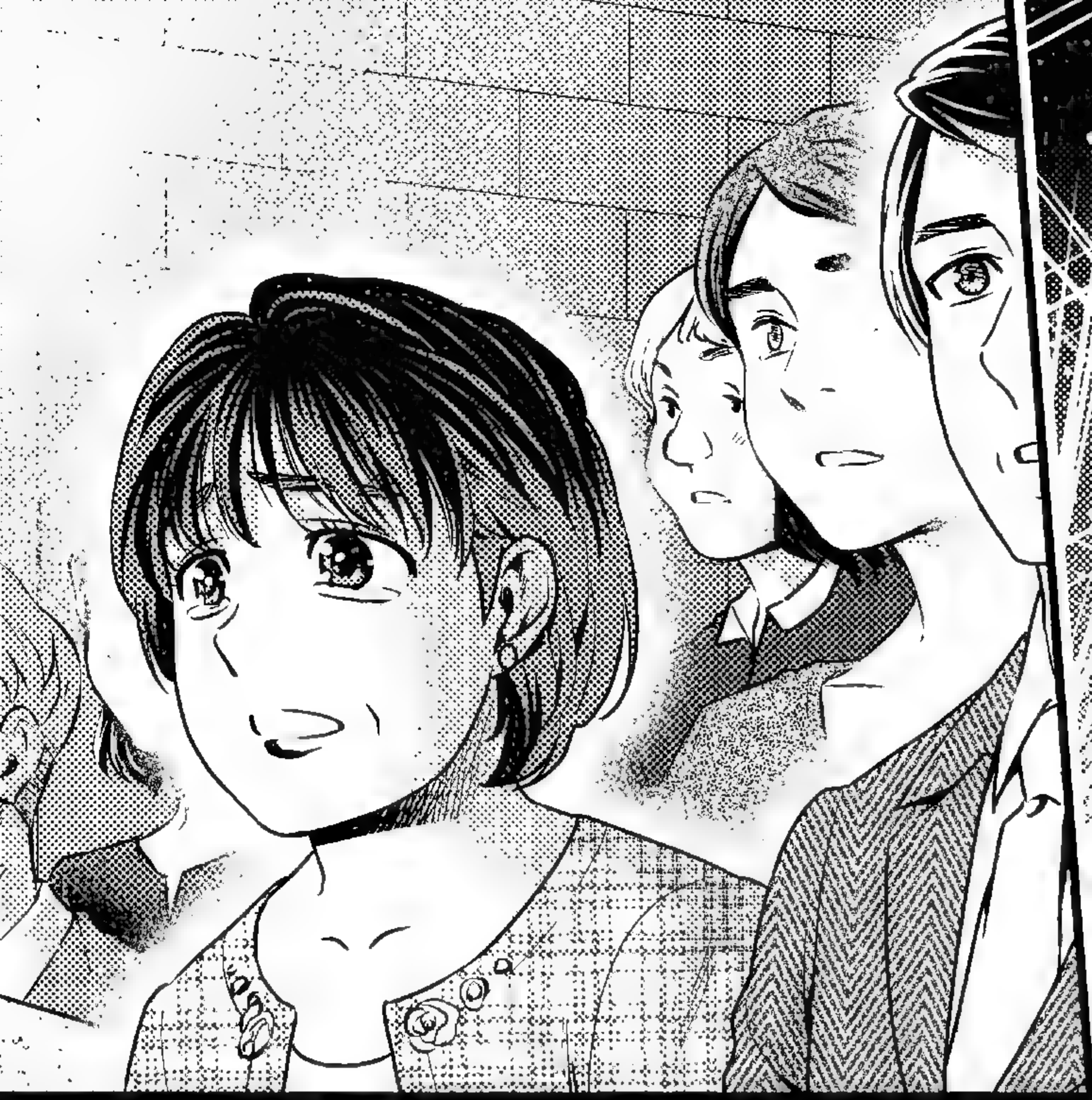
DID SHE
FORGET
HER
LINES?

SOME-
THING
THAT
GRABS
YOU
BY THE
HEART.

...THE
EXHILA-
RATION
I GOT
FROM
WATCHING
THEATER,
TOO.

EVERY-
THING...

SADNESS,
JOY...

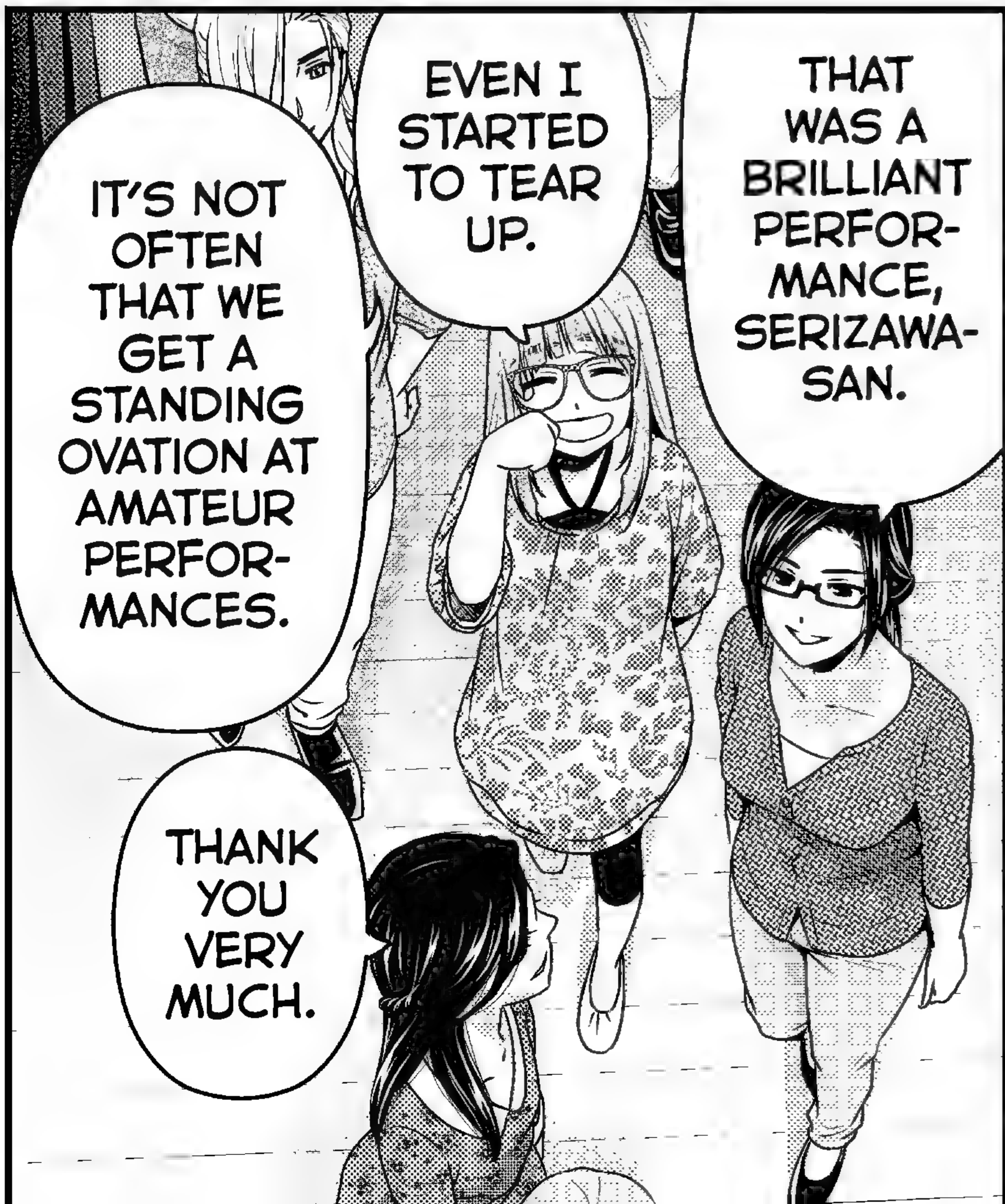
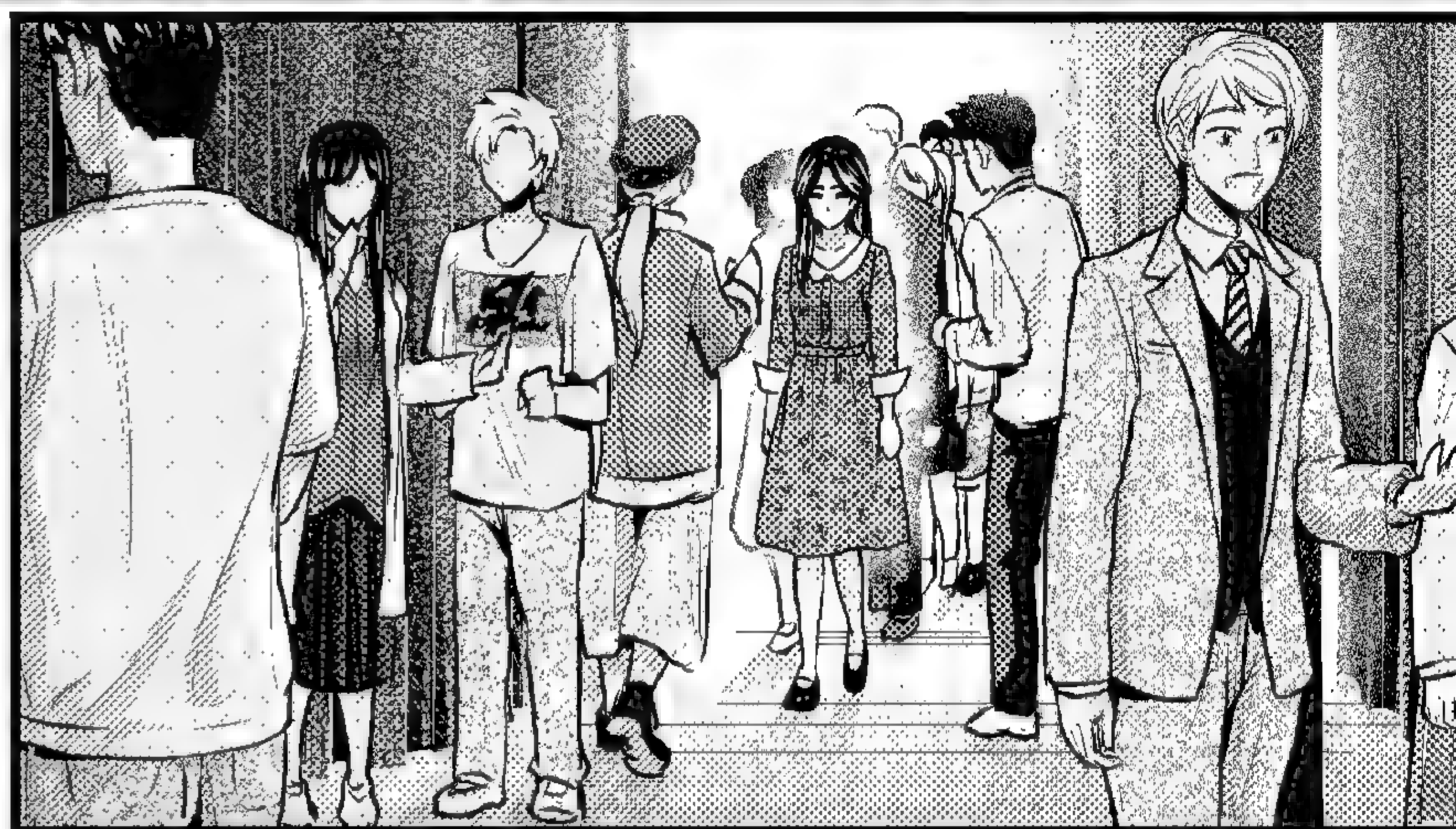
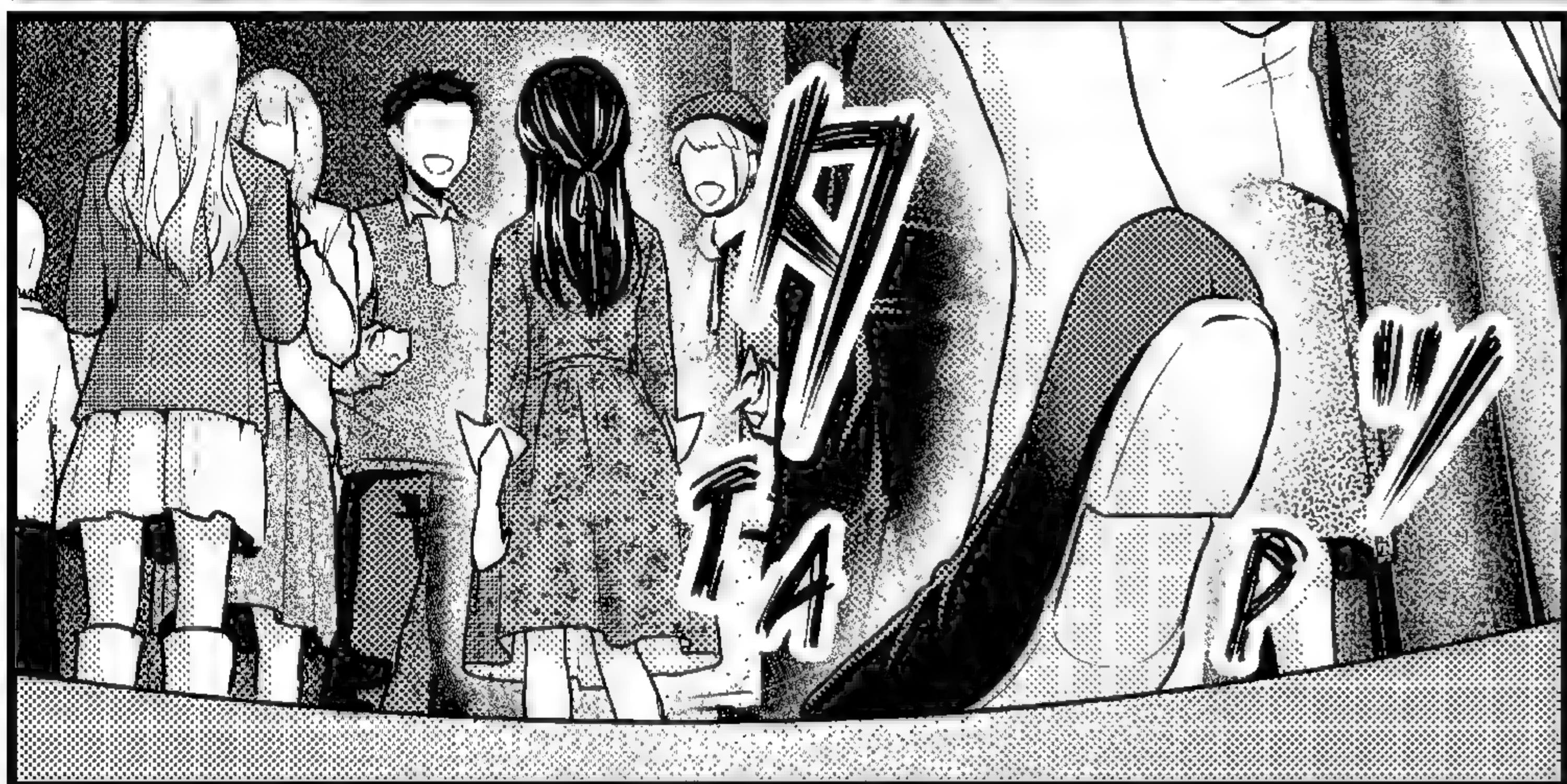


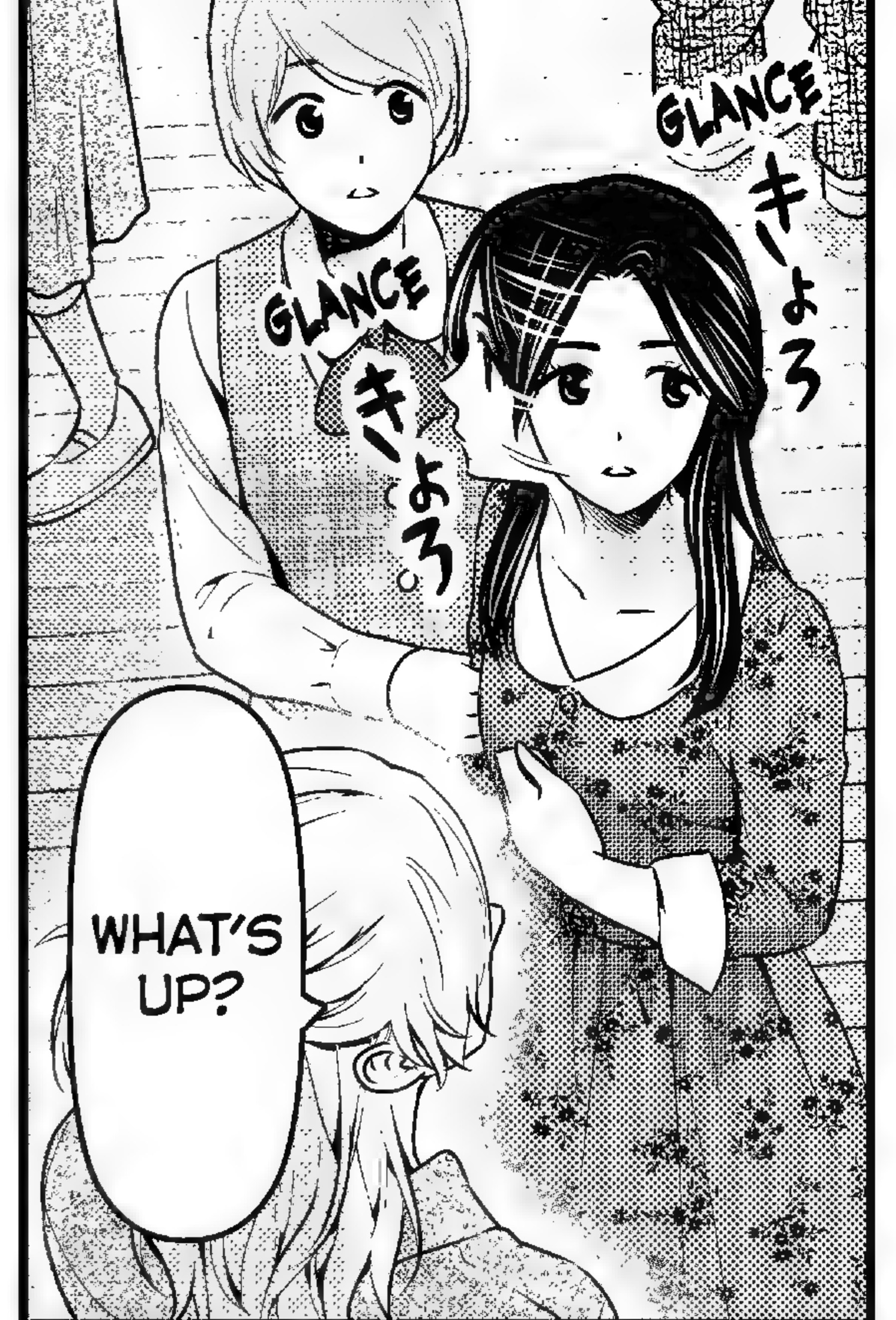
...I'LL WALK
ON MY OWN
TWO FEET!

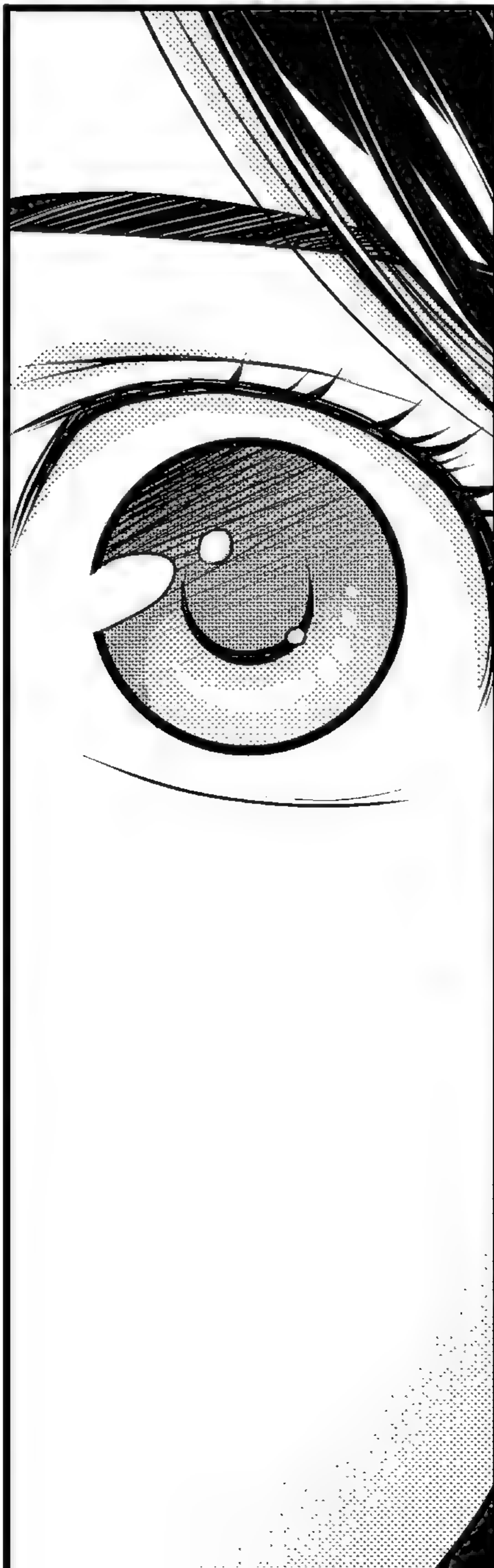


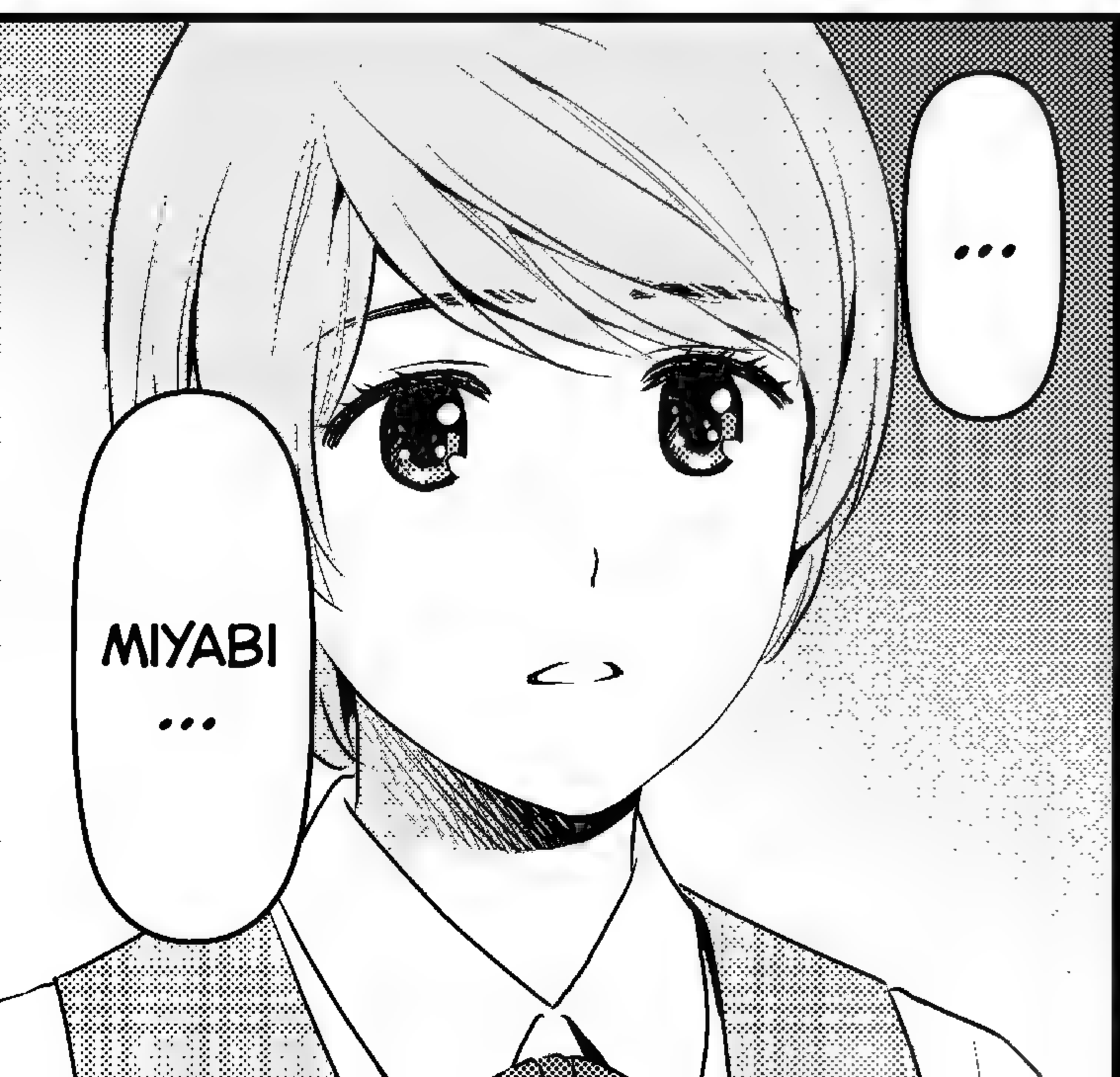
...WAS
FOR THIS
MOMENT.

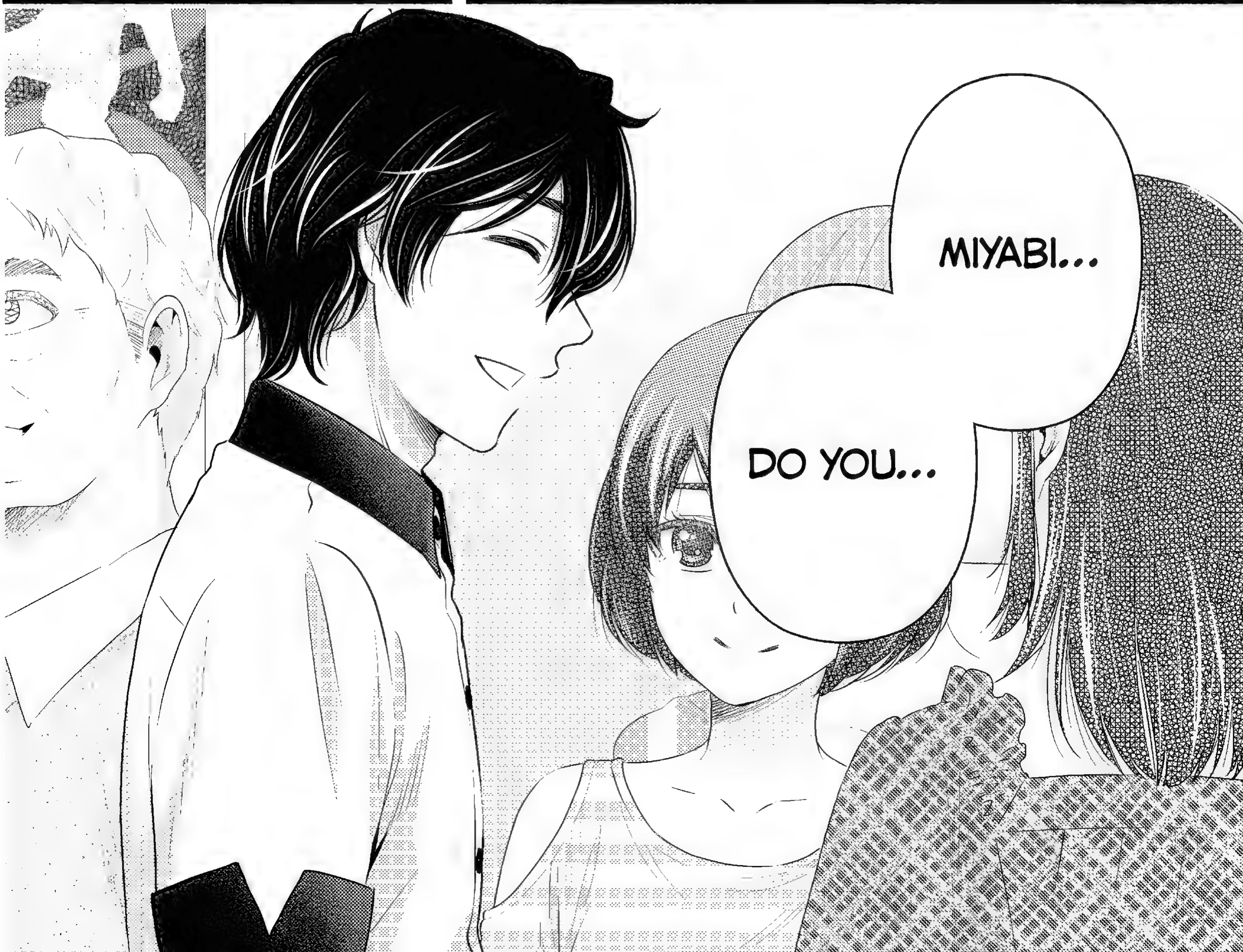
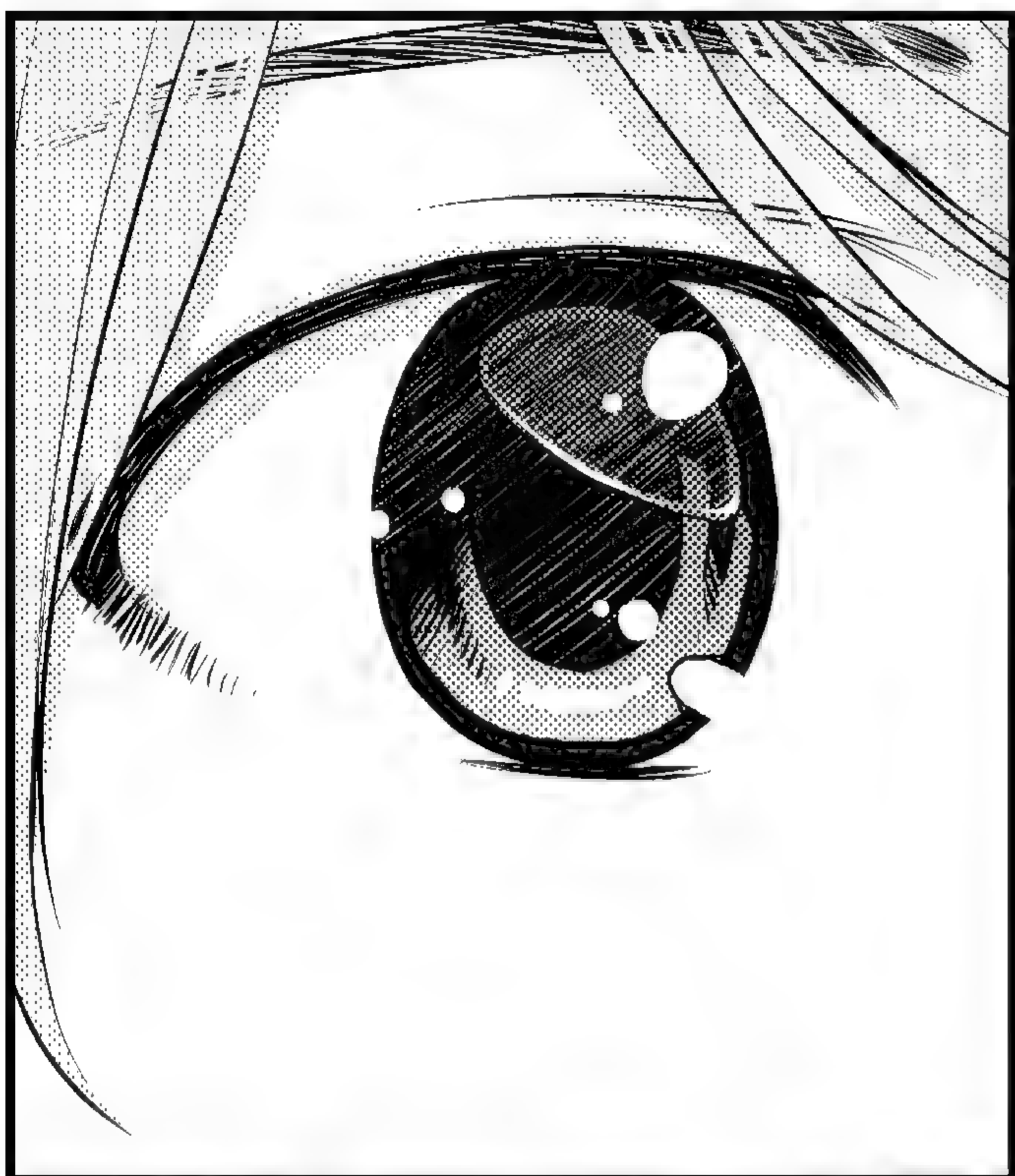
FROM
NOW
ON...











CHAPTER 158:
WHEN LIFE DOESN'T GO YOUR WAY





I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU MANAGED TO CRY DURING THE REAL DEAL!

YOU WERE AMAZING OUT THERE!



GREAT JOB!
THAT APPLAUSE WAS CRAZY, HUH?

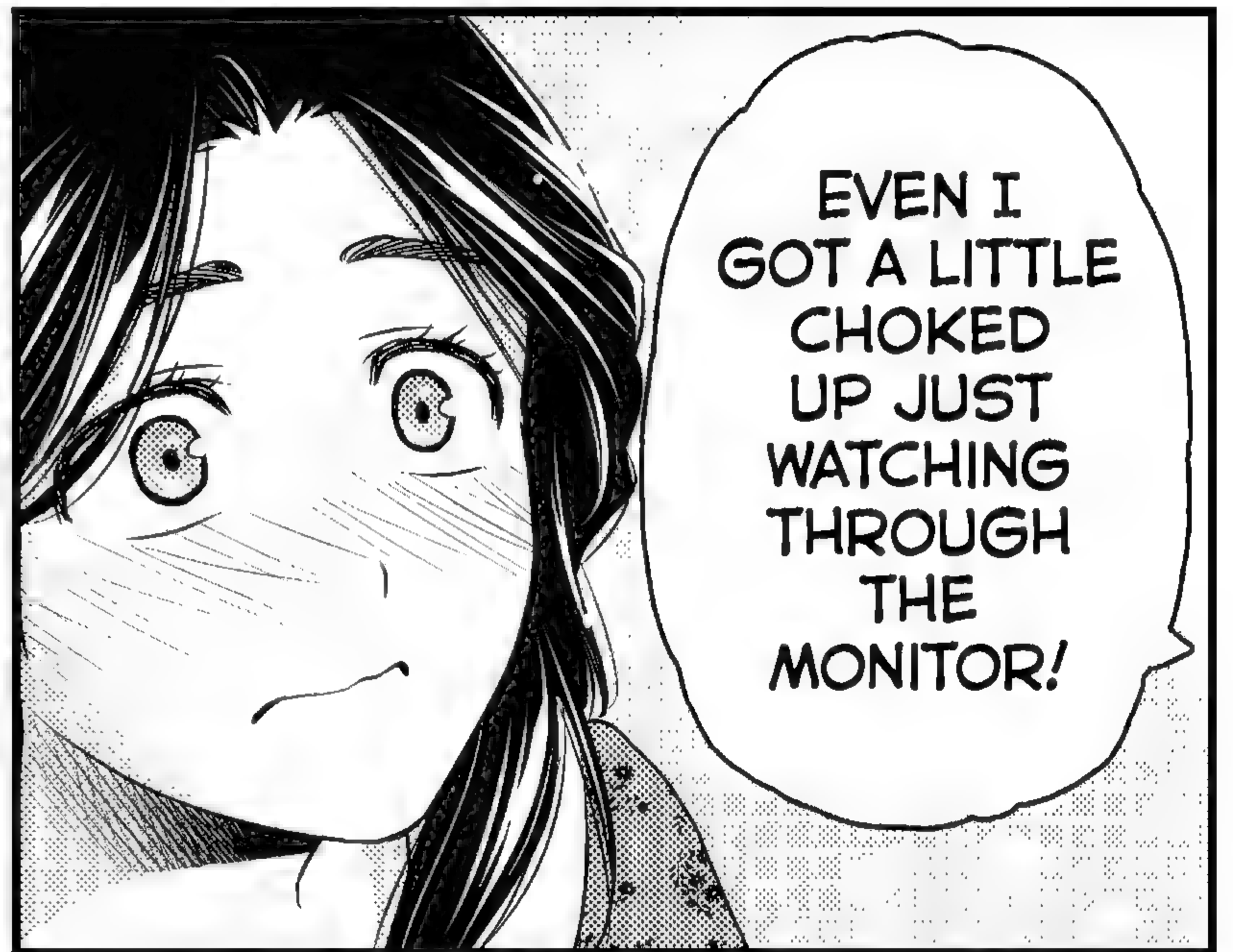
Y-
YEAH.



HONESTLY, I WAS MOSTLY JUST REALLY MOVED BY ONE OF THE AUDIENCE MEMBERS.

I-IT WAS A FLUKE ...

OH, REALLY?



EVEN I GOT A LITTLE CHOKED UP JUST WATCHING THROUGH THE MONITOR!



UH,
UM ...

JUST SPIT IT OUT...!

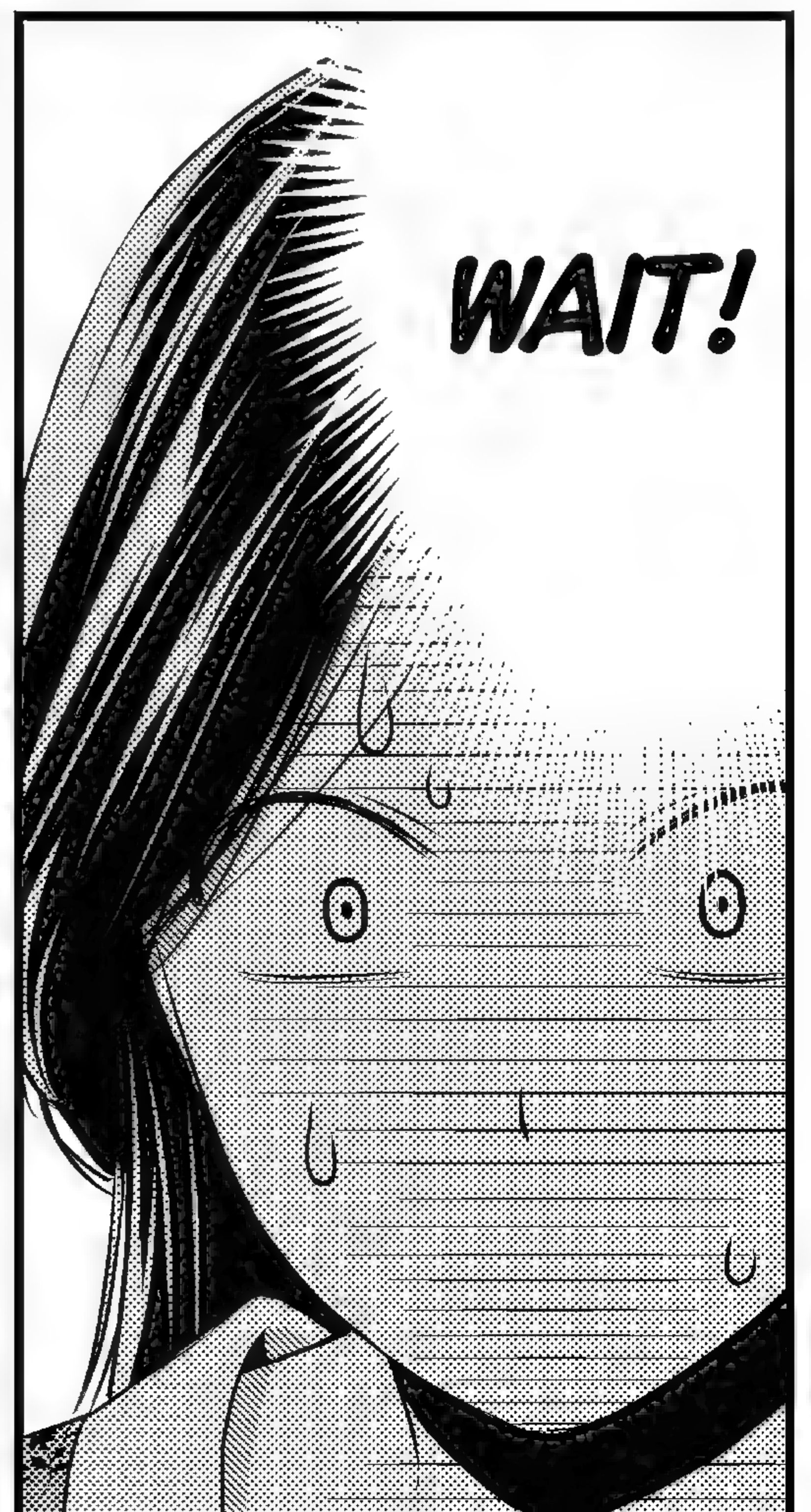
I...!



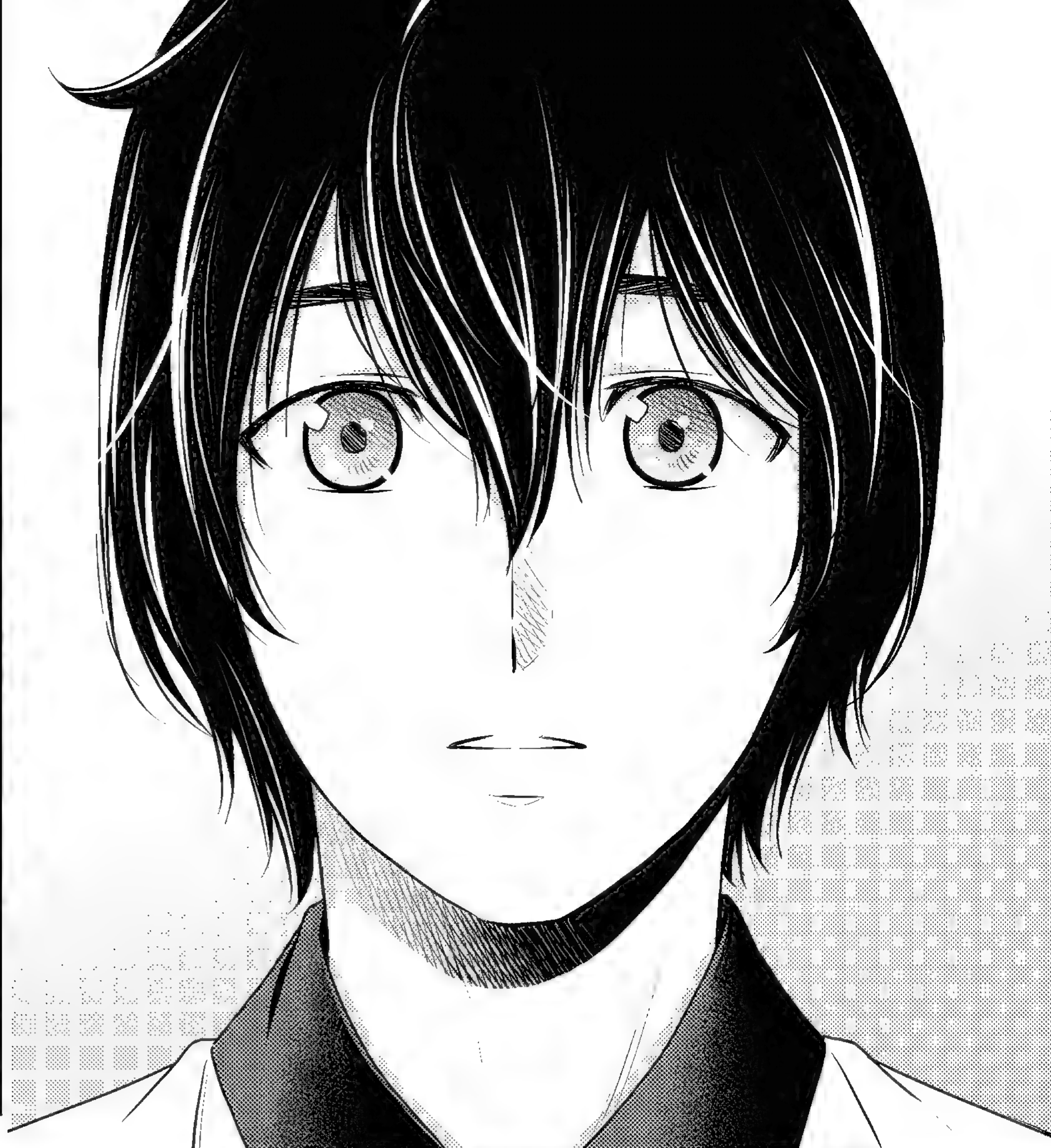
I ONLY PULLED THIS OFF BECAUSE OF HIM.

I NEED TO THANK HIM FOR EVERYTHING HE'S DONE FOR ME.

WHY AM I BEING SO NEGATIVE? I SHOULD BE THANKING HIM!

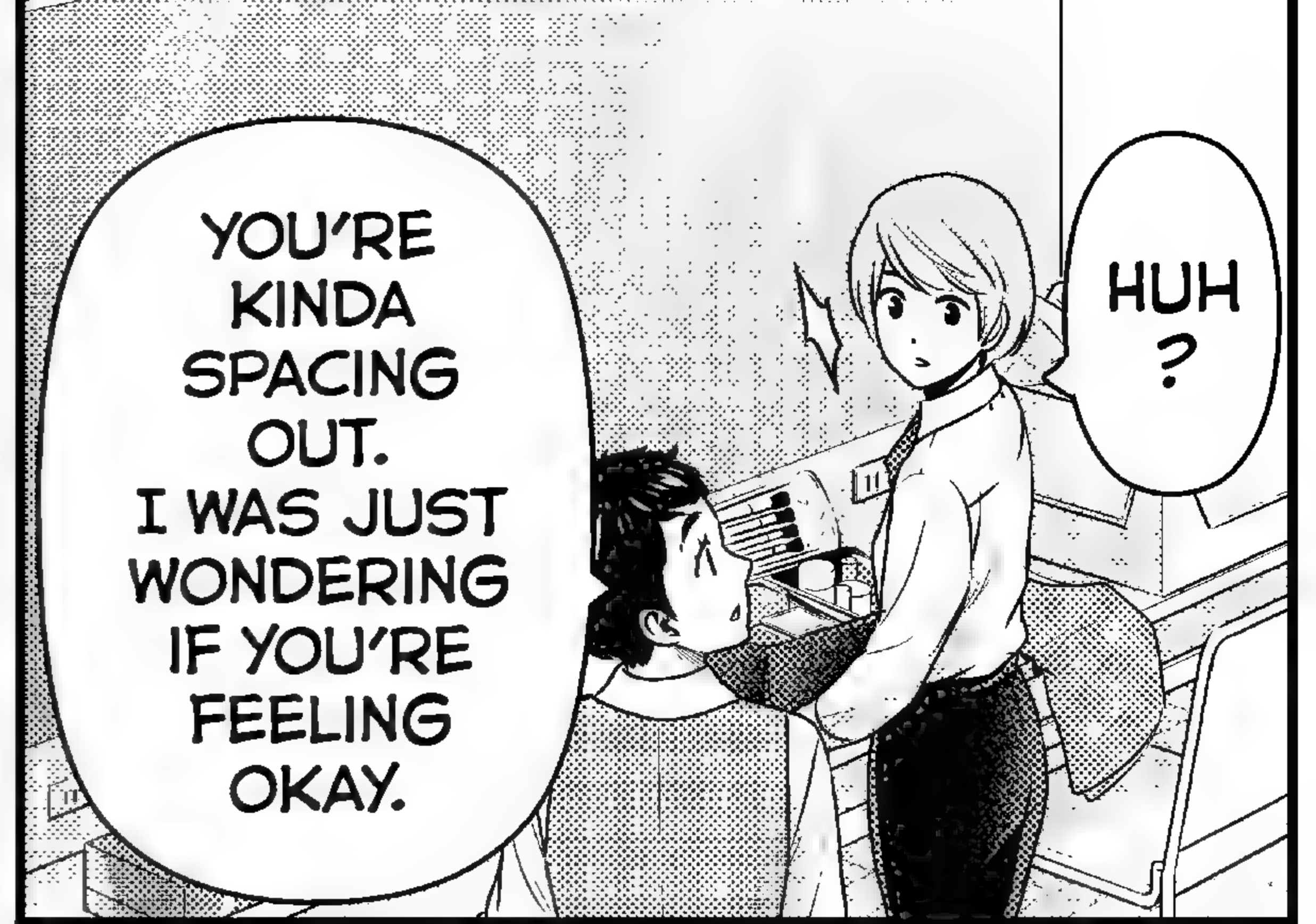


WAIT!





ABOUT
WHAT?



YOU'RE
KINDA
SPACING
OUT.
I WAS JUST
WONDERING
IF YOU'RE
FEELING
OKAY.

HUH
?



I WAS
JUST
THINK-
ING.

Y-YEAH,
I'M FINE.



I THINK I
MIGHT'VE
FOUND A
RIVAL IN
LOVE.

OH,
YOU
KNOW.



ESPE-
CIALLY
THE LAST
SCENE.
THOSE
LINES
WERE
SOOO
GOOD.

I'M
TEARING
UP JUST
THINKING
ABOUT
IT.



THAT REMINDS ME, HINA.

I HEARD YOU MET MY CLIENT'S SON.

I WONDER IF SHE'S THE ONE WHO THREATENED TO BACK OUT OF THE ROLE.

THE GIRL WHO PLAYED THE LEAD WAS REALLY GOOD.



DON'T SPOIL ANYTHING! AKIHITO-SAN AND I ARE GOING TO SEE IT TOMORROW.

AWW! BUT I WANNA TALK ABOUT IT!



YEAH.

YOU MEAN THE ARRANGED MARRIAGE GUY?

YOU COULD'VE TOLD ME YOU MET HIM.



ALL I SAID WAS THAT I'D THINK ABOUT IT!

WHY DID YOU GO FORWARD WITHOUT MY PERMISSION, THOUGH?



!

HE MENTIONED IT THE OTHER DAY.



I MENTIONED THAT YOU FOUND A JOB AT THAT HOTEL WHEN WE FIRST TALKED, BUT THAT'S ALL.

HUH?

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING. WE HAVEN'T SPOKEN ABOUT IT AT ALL SINCE THEN.





...FROM
THE AR-
RANGED
MAR-
RIAGE.

HINA-NEE
APPAR-
ENTLY
MET THAT
GUY...



HRR?

MRG



ARE
YOU
CURI-
OUS?

UM...
I MEANT
HIS PER-
SONALITY.



BECAUSE HE
MIGHT DATE
THE WOMAN
YOU USED
TO LOVE?

DO GUYS
WANT THEIR
EXES TO
LOVE THEM
AND ONLY
THEM FOR-
EVER?

A
LITTLE
...



IT-KOF
ホ

KOF-IT
ホ

O-OH,
YEAH
?
WHAT'S
HE
LIKE?

I GUESS
HE'S A
HOTTIE FROM
A GOOD
SCHOOL
WITH A FAT
SALARY.



IS THAT
REALLY
ALL?

WHAT ARE
YOU TRYIN'
TO SAY?



IF
EVERYTHING
WORKS OUT
THIS GUY
WILL BE OUR
BROTHER-
IN-LAW,
Y'KNOW!

THAT'S
NOT
HOW
IT IS!

YOU
WANT
HINA-NEE
TO BE
HAPPY,
TOO,
DON'T
YOU?!



I WANT
TO USE
ONE OF
MY KISS
TICKETS.

MADE ONE

Kiss
Tickets
5 MAX



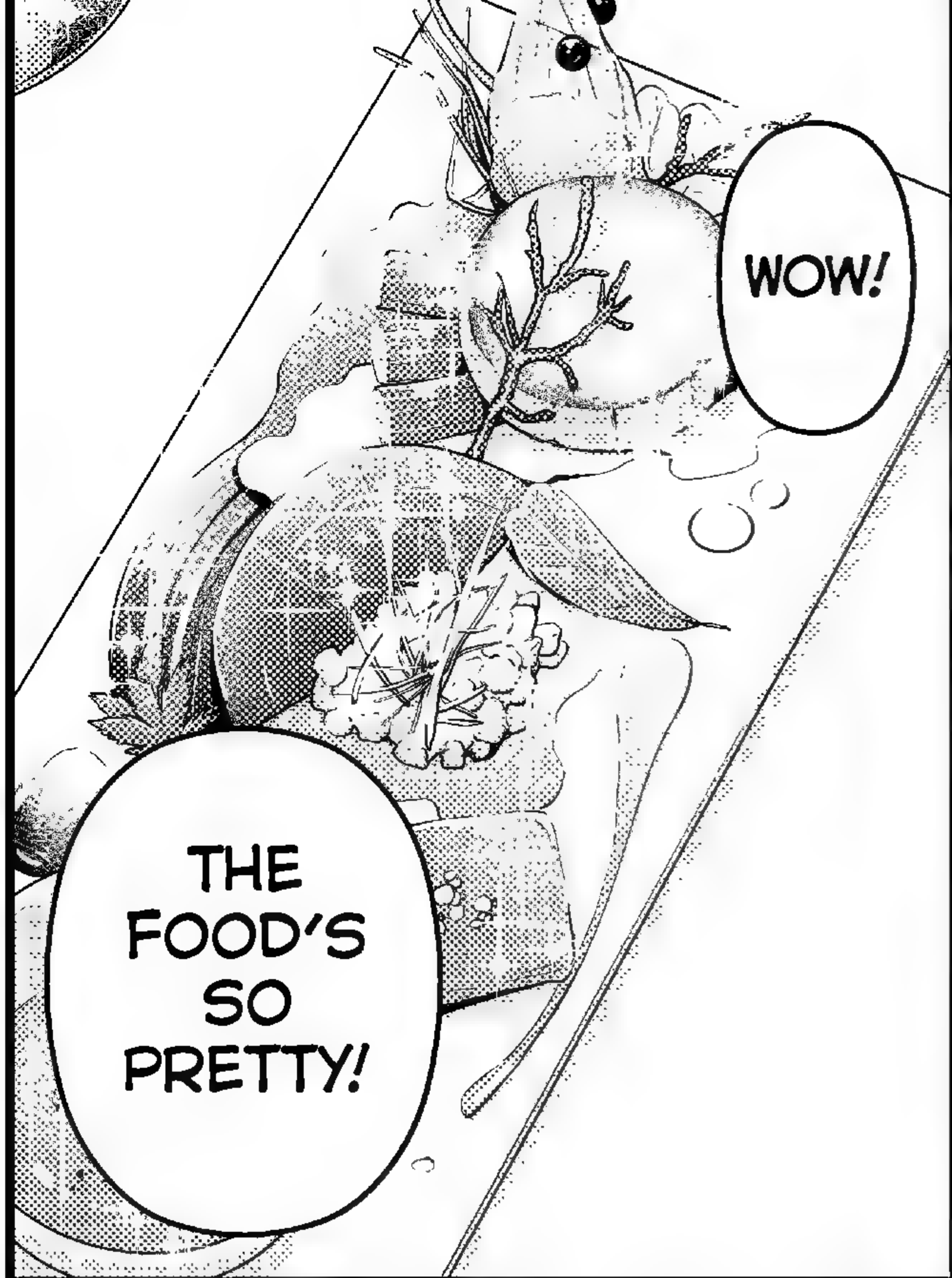
KINDA
FEELS
LIKE
A COP
OUT...

WELL,
WHATEVER...

ち MWAH

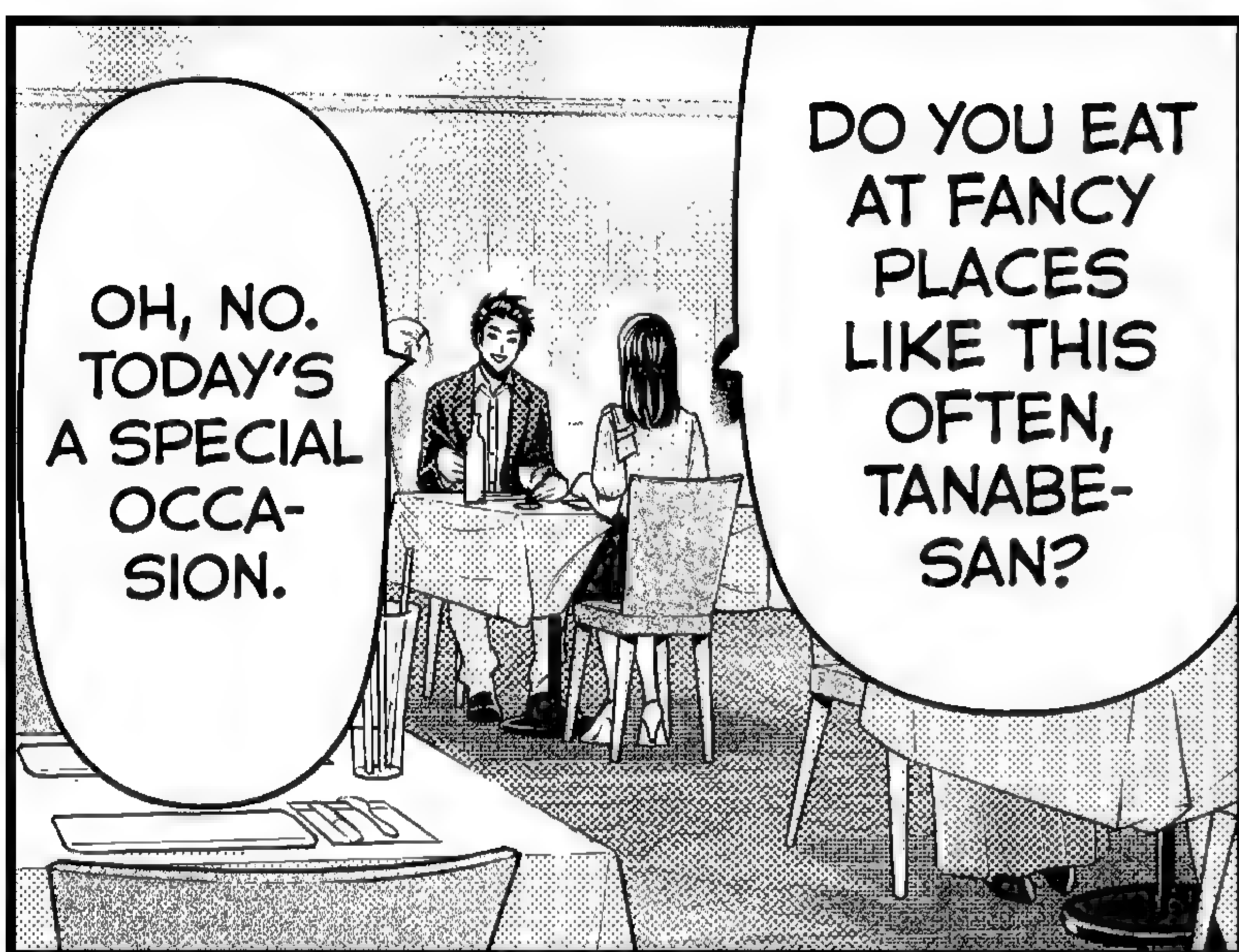
I FIGURED
I'D USE
THEM WHEN
IT LOOKS
LIKE WE'RE
ABOUT TO
FIGHT.





WOW!

THE
FOOD'S
SO
PRETTY!



OH, NO.
TODAY'S
A SPECIAL
OCCA-
SION.

DO YOU EAT
AT FANCY
PLACES
LIKE THIS
OFTEN,
TANABE-
SAN?



SORRY
TO MAKE
YOU GO
TO THE
TROU-
BLE.

I ASKED
ALL OF MY
COWORK-
ERS FOR
RESTAURANT
RECOMMEN-
DATIONS.

DON'T BE!
I MOSTLY
CHOSE THIS
PLACE FOR
MYSELF,
ANYWAY.



I'VE
NEVER HAD
ANYTHING
LIKE THIS
BEFORE.

REALLY?
I'M GLAD
YOU LIKE
IT.



I WISH I
COULD GIVE
MY LITTLE
SISTER A
TASTE.

I DIDN'T
KNOW
THERE WERE
ITALIAN
DISHERS
LIKE THIS.

THE
FLAVOR'S
REALLY
ELEGANT,
BUT NOT
TOO
SUBTLE.

YOUR
SISTER
?



MMM!



CAN
YOU
COOK,
TOO,
HINA-
SAN?

THEN
YOUR
FAMILY
MUST BE
PRETTY
PARTIC-
ULAR
ABOUT
FOOD,
HUH?

A
CHEF?
WOW!

YES. SHE'S
A CHEF AT
AN ITALIAN
RESTAURANT.



WHAT DO
YOU DO
ON YOUR
DAYS OFF,
HINA-SAN?



REALLY?
YOU'RE
MORE
OF AN
INDOORS
TYPE,
THEN?

I
GUESS
SO.

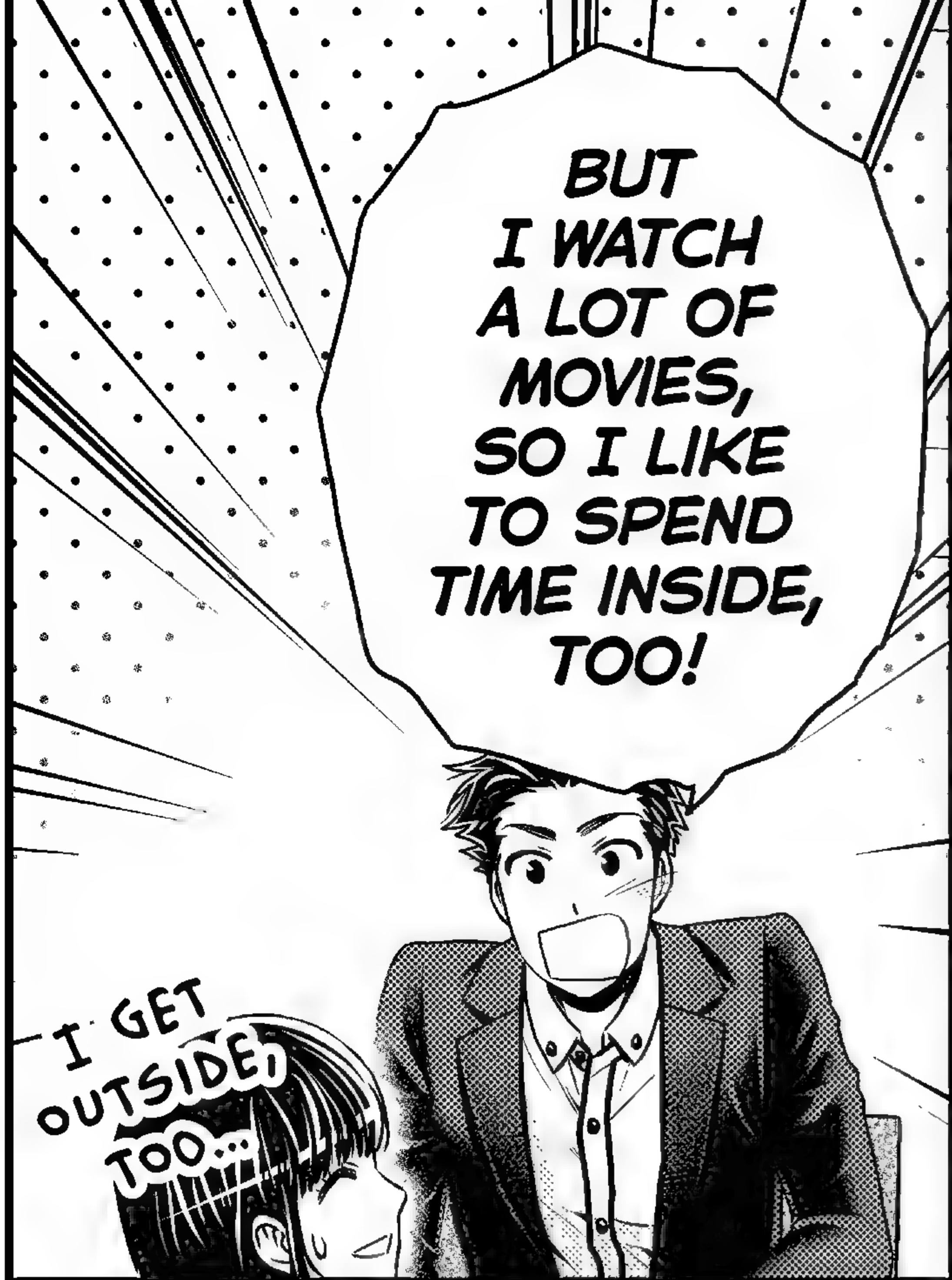
I'M A
COMEDY
BUFF, SO
I LIKE TO
BINGE ON
VARIETY
SHOWS I
RECORDED
DURING
THE WEEK.

LET'S
SEE.



NOT
AT ALL...
I'M A
DISASTER
IN THE
KITCHEN.

OH,
PLEASE.



**BUT
I WATCH
A LOT OF
MOVIES,
SO I LIKE
TO SPEND
TIME INSIDE,
TOO!**

**I GET
OUTSIDE
TOO...**



**YES.
I PLAY
A LOT OF
FUTSAL.**

**I GOT
THAT
IMPRES-
SION.**

**I TAKE IT
YOU'RE MORE
OF AN OUT-
DOOR TYPE,
TANABE-SAN?**



**I STAY
UP ALL
NIGHT
WATCHING
THE
GAMES
LIVE!**

**YOU
KNOW
IT!**



**YOU MUST
GET REALLY
EXCITED
FOR THE
WORLD CUP,
THEN.**

**I PLAYED
SOCCER
THROUGH
HIGH SCHOOL,
SO I STILL
LOVE WATCH-
ING AND
PLAYING IT.**



**THERE'S
SO MUCH
TECH-
NIQUE AND
STRATEGY
INVOLVED.**

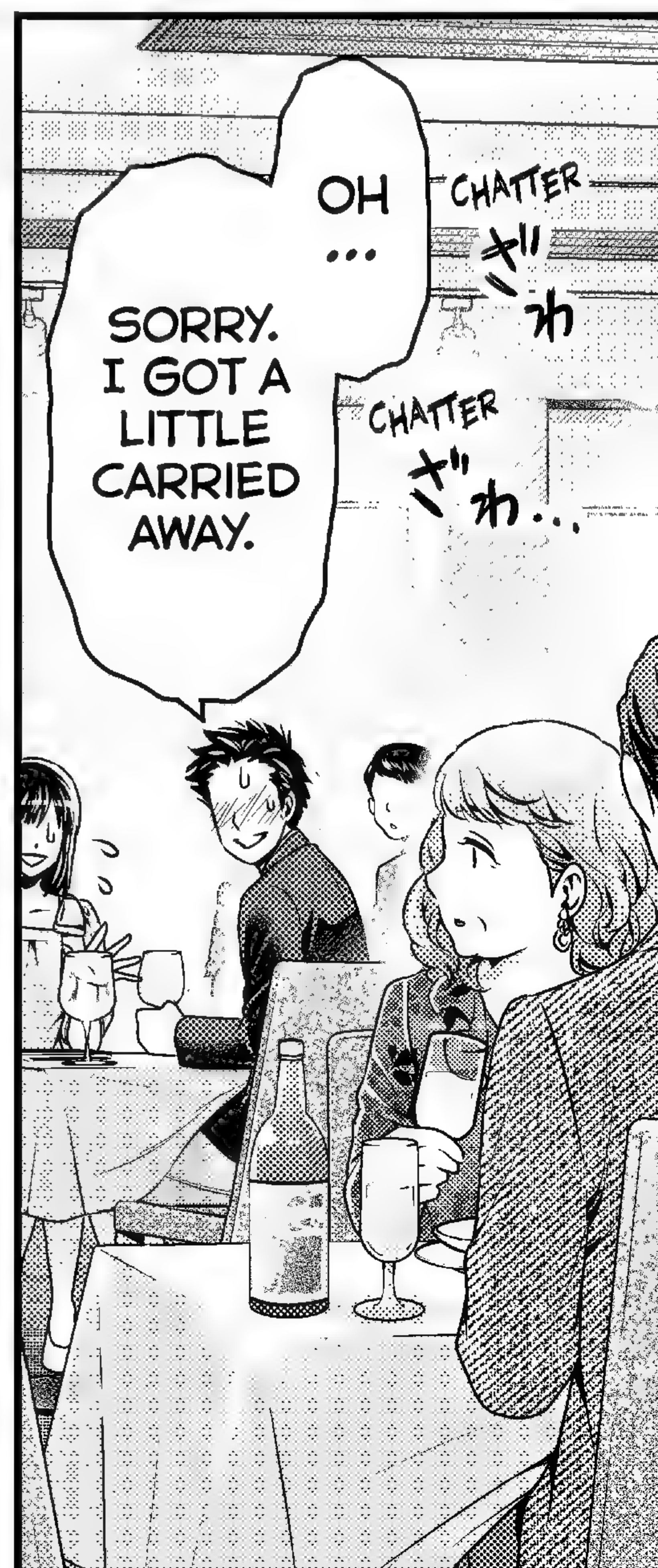
**IT'S
REALLY IN-
TERESTING
ONCE YOU
KNOW THE
GAME.**



**SOME-
TIMES,
IF IT
HAPPENS
TO BE
ON.**

**DO YOU
WATCH
SPORTS
AT ALL,
HINA-SAN?**

**IF WE
EVER
WATCH
SOCCER
TOGETHER,
I CAN
GIVE YOU
A PLAY-BY-
PLAY!**

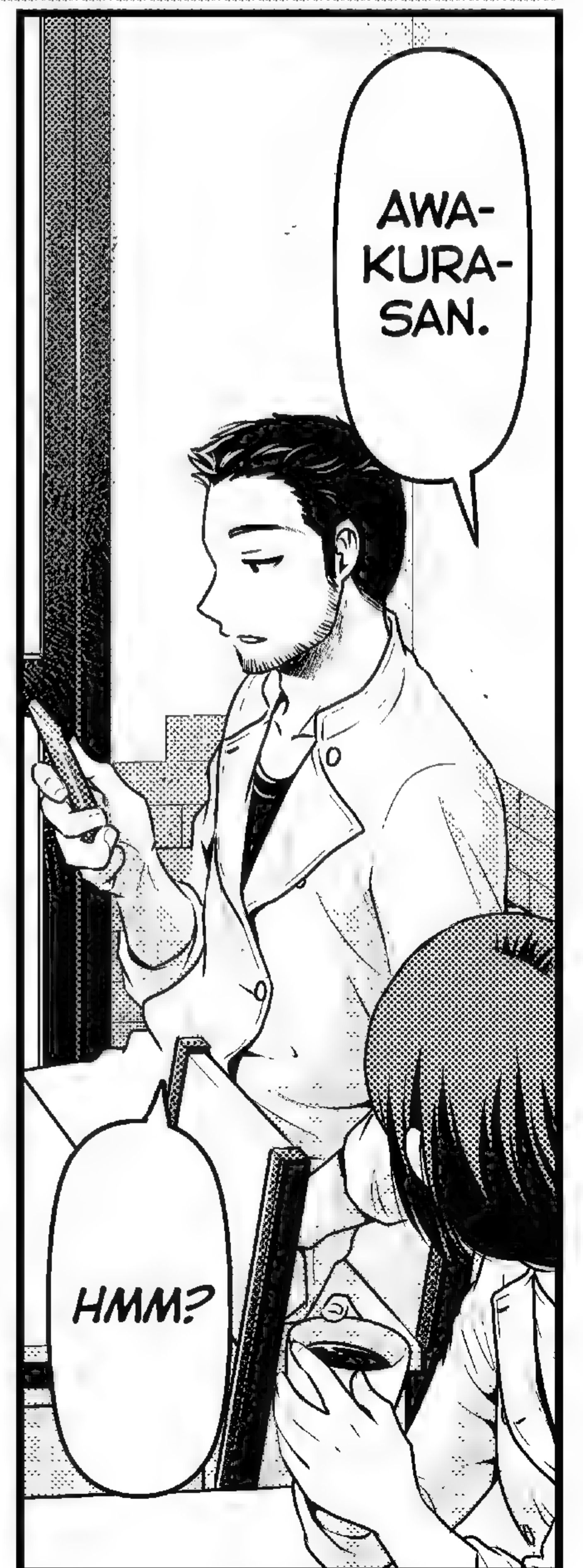


**OH ...
SORRY.
I GOT A
LITTLE
CARRIED
AWAY.**

**CHATTER
チャハ
CHATTER
チャハ...**









I WANT TO
FEEL LIKE I
TRUST HIM,

BUT
IT'S LIKE
THERE'S
ALWAYS THIS
FAINT SENSE
OF DOUBT
IN THE BACK
OF MY
MIND.

IT'S
JUST...

I DUNNO.



WHAT
GIVES
?

DID YOU
AND YOUR
BOYFRIEND
FIGHT
AGAIN?

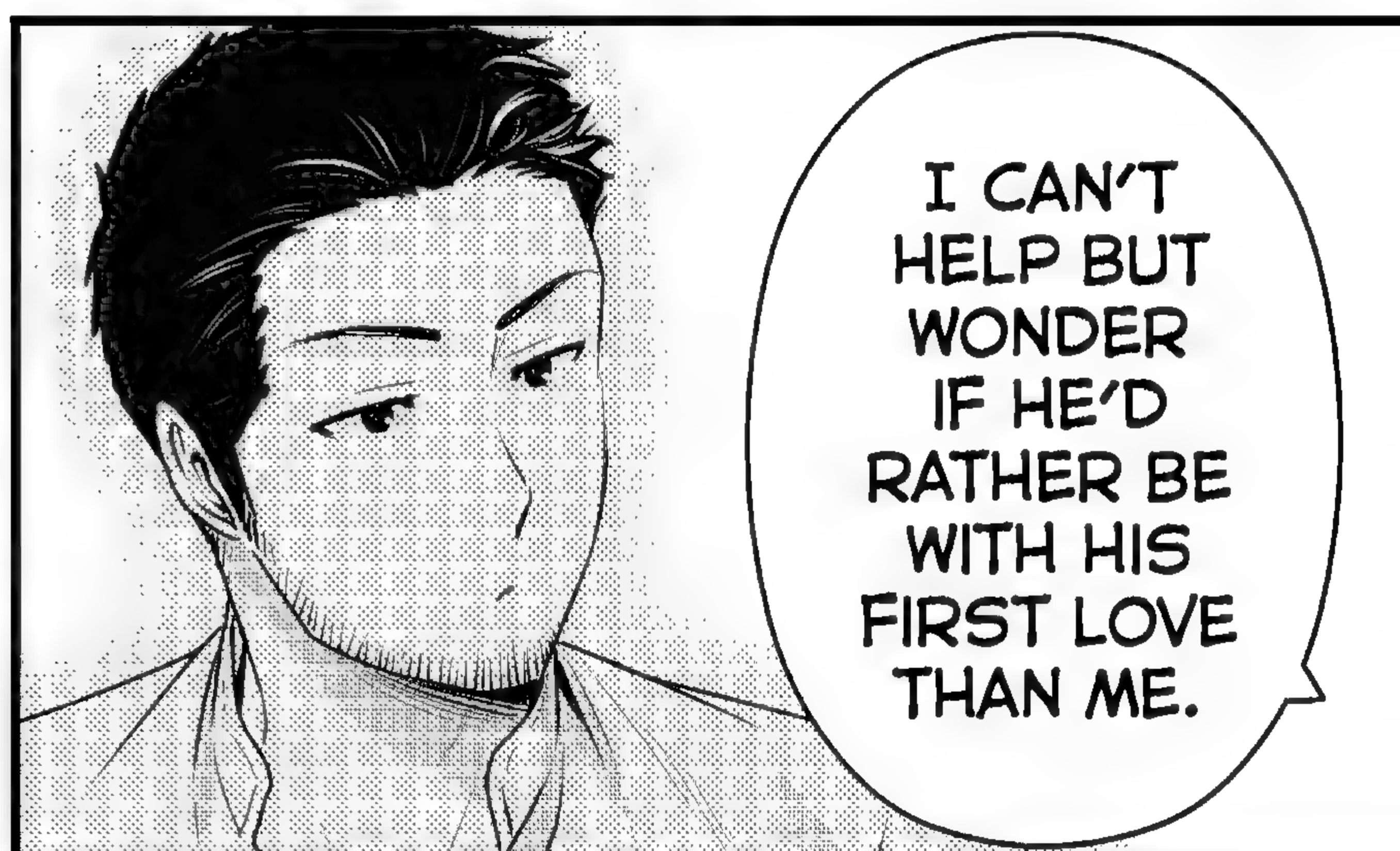
NOT
REALLY.



IT
DOESN'T
HAVE ANY-
THING TO
DO WITH
MOVING
ON OR FOR-
GETTING
YOUR EX.

TAK
T

DON'T
YOU THINK
THAT
FEELING
GOES
BOTH
WAYS?



I CAN'T
HELP BUT
WONDER
IF HE'D
RATHER BE
WITH HIS
FIRST LOVE
THAN ME.



HOW
WOULD YOU
FEEL IF NO
MATTER HOW
MUCH YOU
TOLD YOUR
BOYFRIEND
YOU LOVED
HIM,

HE
REFUSED
TO BELIEVE
YOU AND KEPT
THINKING YOU'D
RATHER BE
WITH SOMEONE
ELSE?
IT'D SUCK,
RIGHT?

IT'S NOT
FAIR TO
PIN THAT
ON YOUR
BOYFRIEND,
RIGHT?

I THINK THE
REASON YOU
FEEL SO
INSECURE
IS BECAUSE
YOU DON'T
HAVE ANY
CONFIDENCE,
RUI-CHAN.

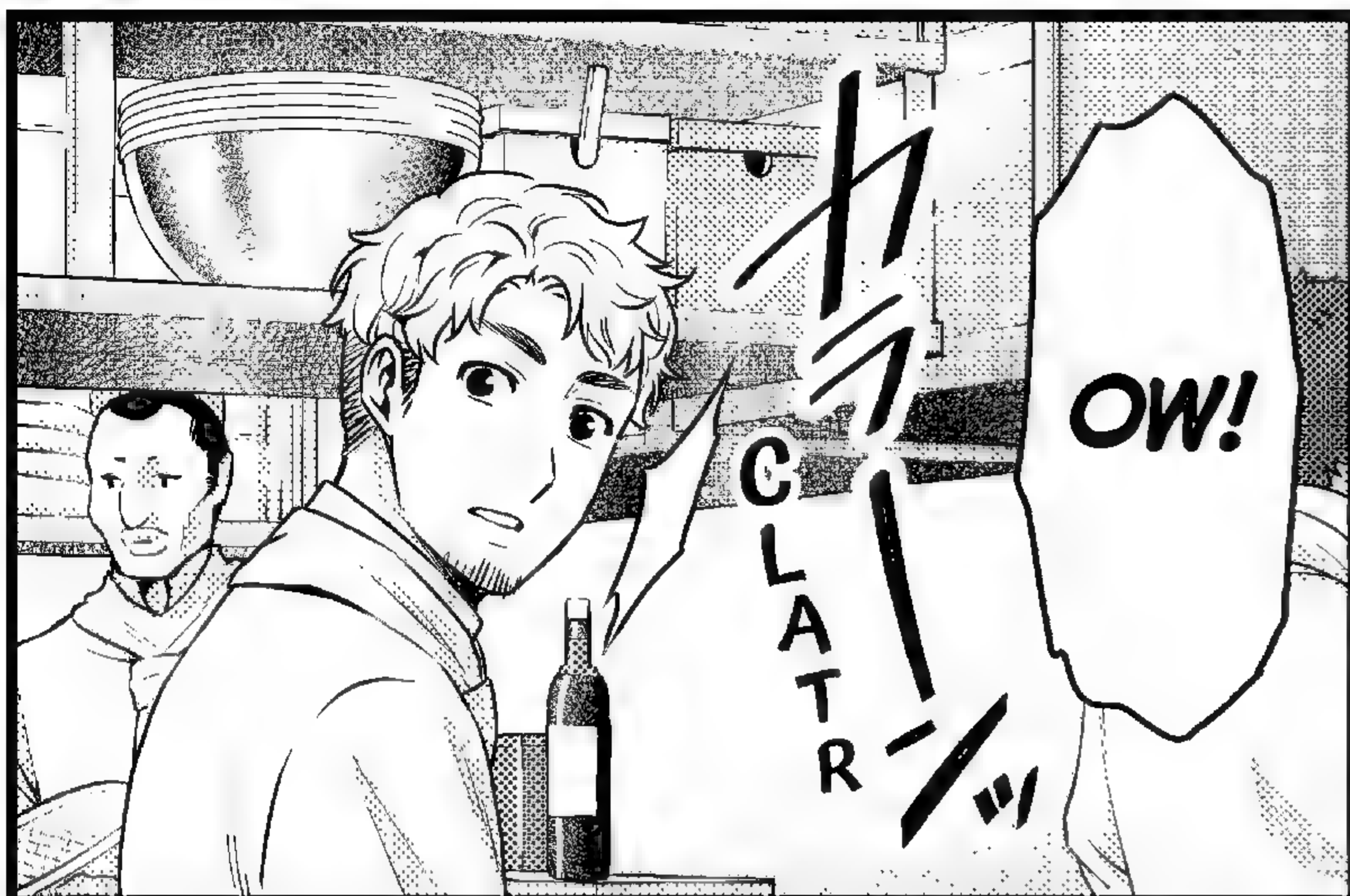
!





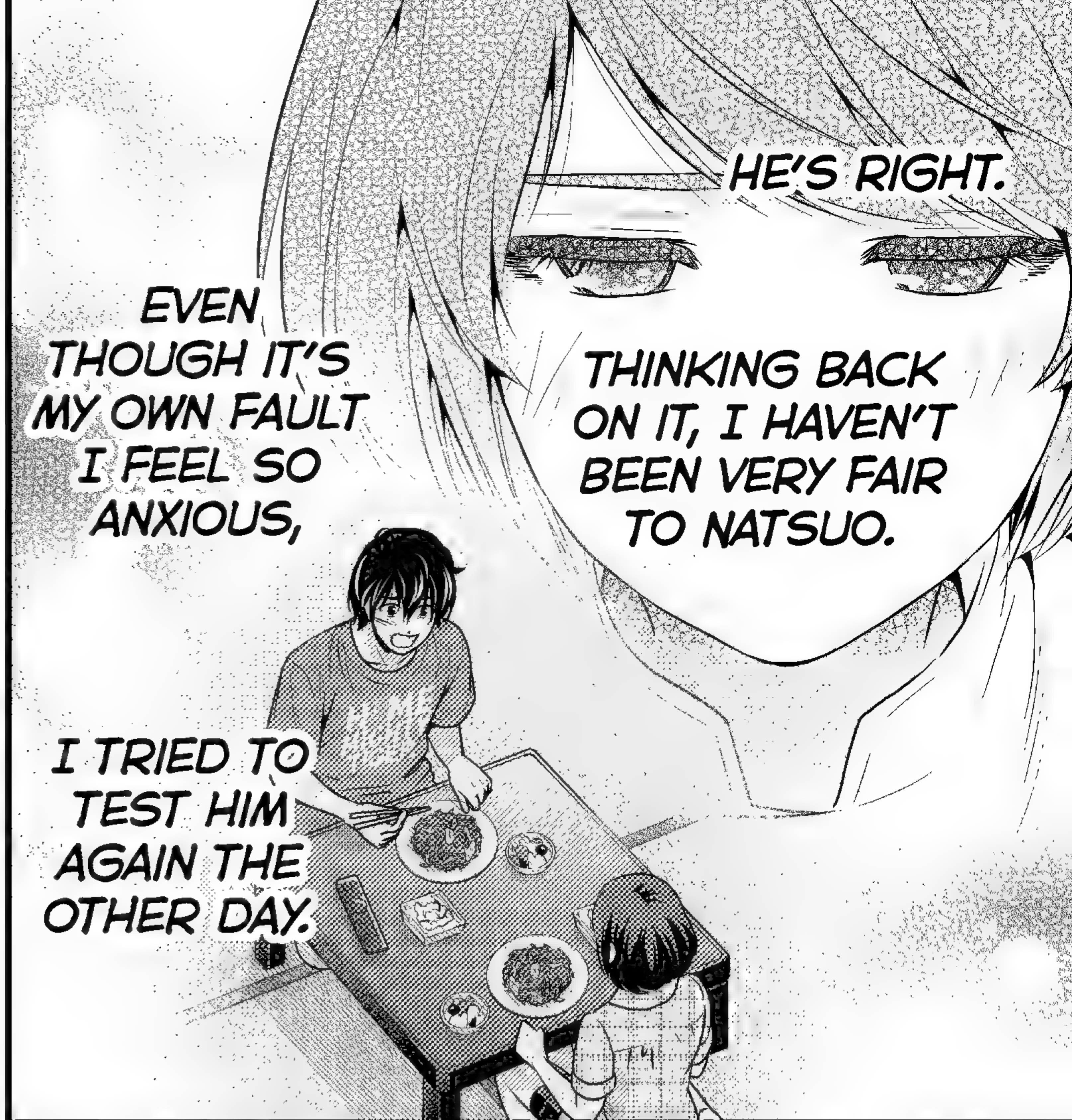
GOD...

I CAN BE
SO NASTY.



OW!

CLAT

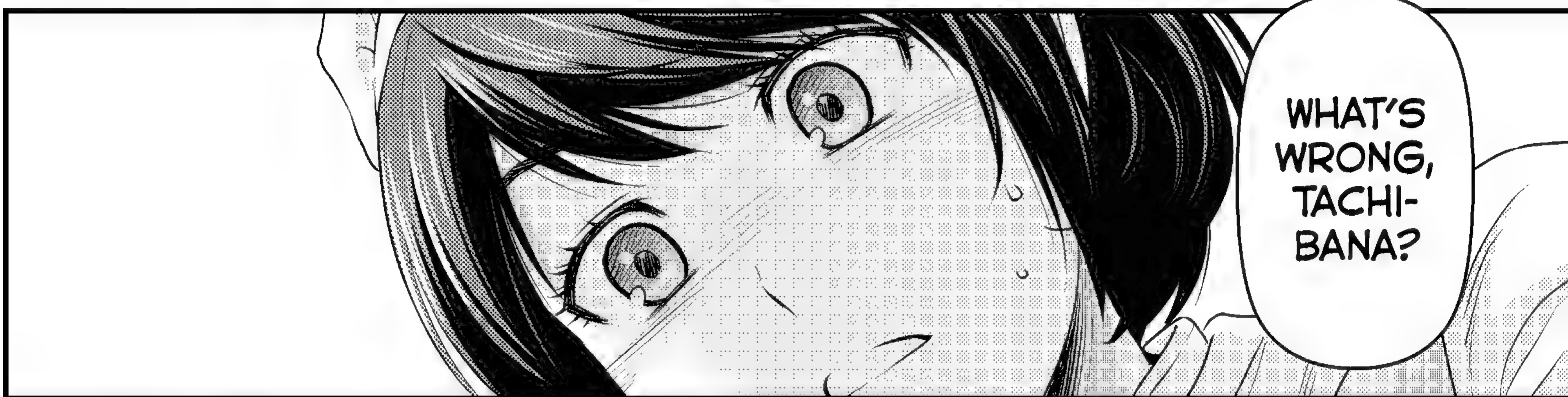


HE'S RIGHT.

EVEN
THOUGH IT'S
MY OWN FAULT
I FEEL SO
ANXIOUS,

THINKING BACK
ON IT, I HAVEN'T
BEEN VERY FAIR
TO NATSUO.

I TRIED TO
TEST HIM
AGAIN THE
OTHER DAY.



WHAT'S
WRONG,
TACHI-
BANA?



TACHI-
BANA!

CHAPTER 159: EVER-CHANGING NORMALCY



SIGN: MIYAKO



MEH. IT'S
NOTHIN'
TO BRAG
ABOUT.

WE GOT
A GOOD
REACTION
FROM THE
CROWD
EVERY
NIGHT.

THAT
CON-
STANT
STREAM
OF AP-
PLAUSE!



DON'T LISTEN
TO HIM. HE'S
JUST BITTER
BECAUSE HIS
FIRST SHOW
DIDN'T GO
OVER NEARLY
AS WELL.

DUDE,
IT'S
NOT
LIKE
THAT!

BUT
WE GOT A
STANDING
OVATION!

YOU
THINK
SO?



MAN,

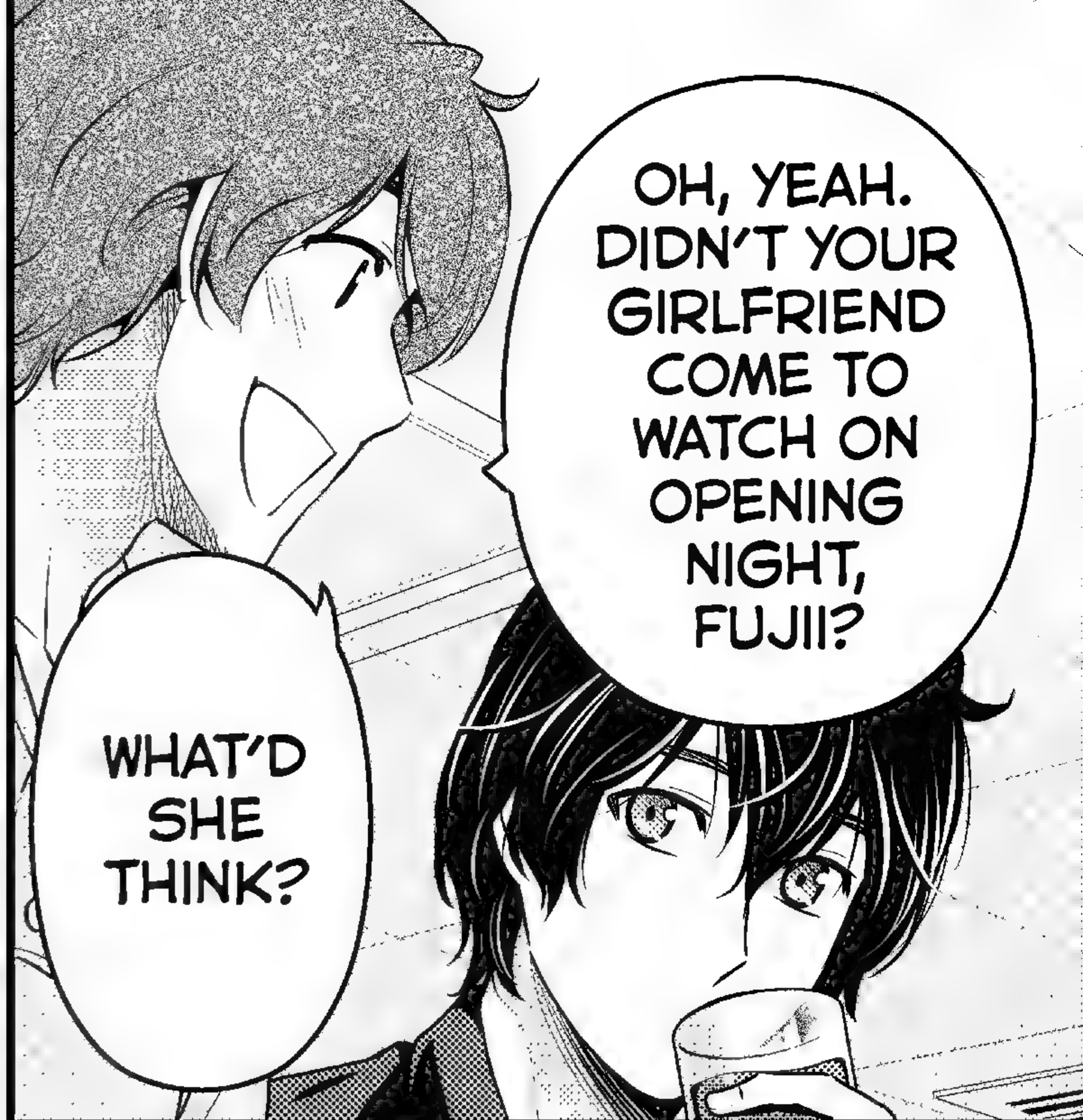
I'M
GETTING
CHILLS
JUST
THINKING
ABOUT IT.



BUT ?

SHE SAID
THE PLAY
WAS REALLY
GOOD,

BUT
...



WHAT'D
SHE
THINK?

OH, YEAH.
DIDN'T YOUR
GIRLFRIEND
COME TO
WATCH ON
OPENING
NIGHT,
FUJII?



POSITIVE.

NO DOUBT
ABOUT IT.

SHE'S
DEFINITELY
CHEATING.

AWW, MAN.
SHE'S
CHEATING.

IT
TAKES
FOREVER
FOR HER
TO READ
MY MES-
SAGES,
TOO.

I DUNNO.
HER REPLIES
HAVE BEEN
KINDA FLAT
ON LINE THE
PAST FEW
DAYS.



OOP.

SPEAK
OF THE
DEVIL?

!



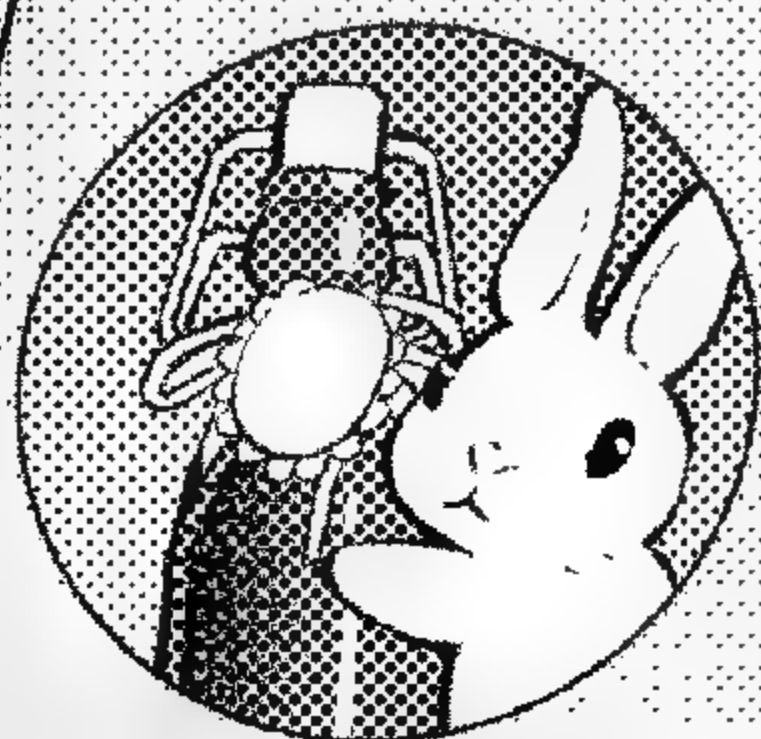
I'M NOT
JEALOUS!
I HAVE A
GIRL, TOO,
Y'KNOW!

JEAL-
OUSY IS
UNBE-
COMING!

QUIT
TRYING
TO JINX
ME!

TODAY

Hina



Hey, Natsuo-kun. There's something I
want to tell you. Rui asked me not to, but
we can't just keep you in the dark forever.
She cut her hand at work





I'M COM-
ING IN.



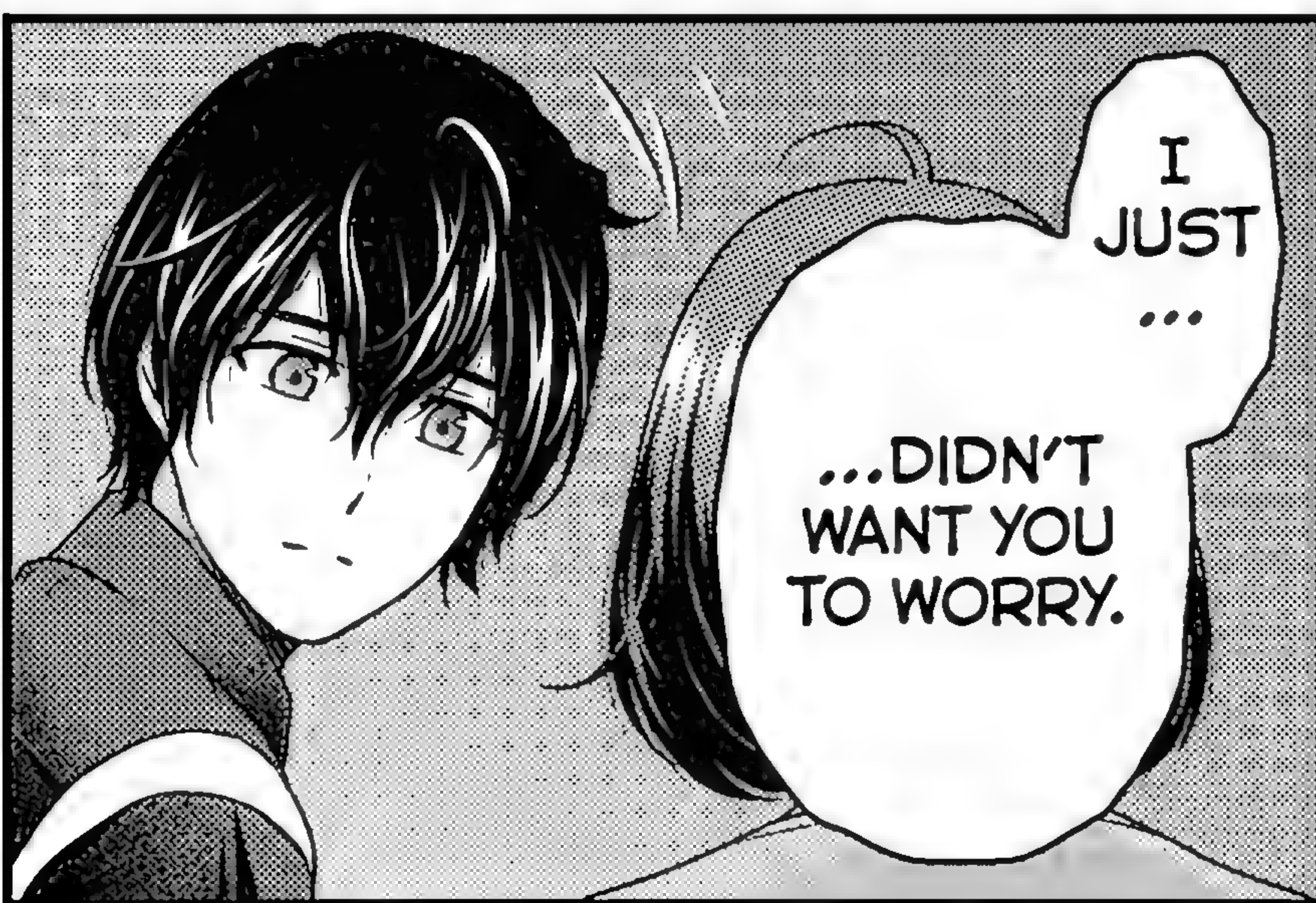
RUI.



I WAS
STUNNED.
YOU DIDN'T
MENTION
ANYTHING
ABOUT IT.

HINA-NEE
TOLD ME
OVER LINE.

WHY
ARE
YOU
HERE
?

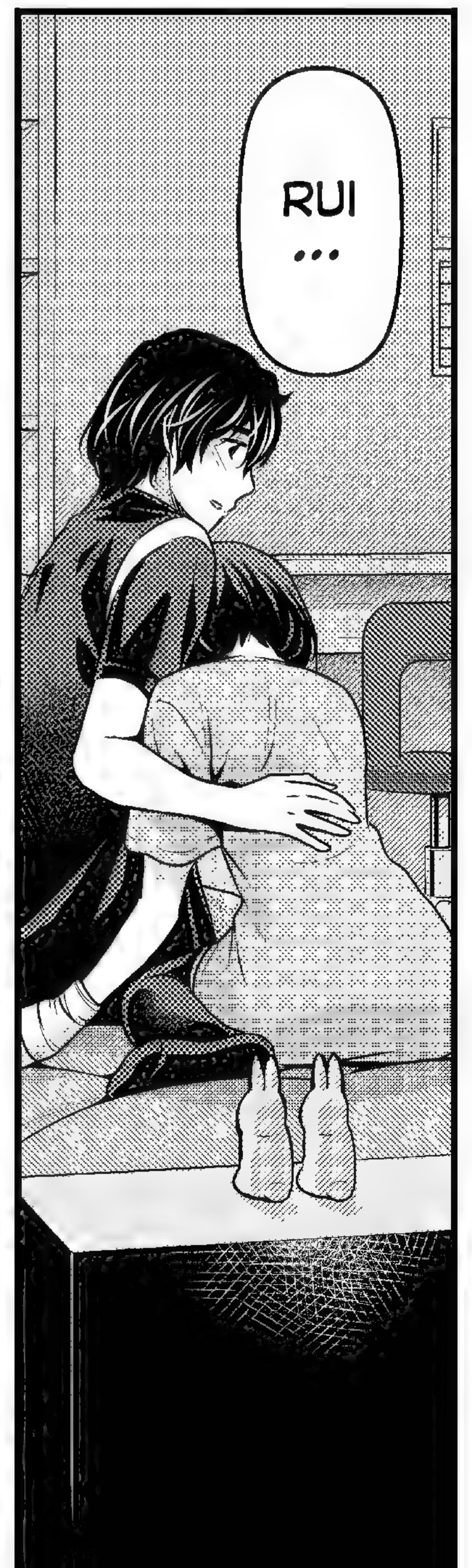


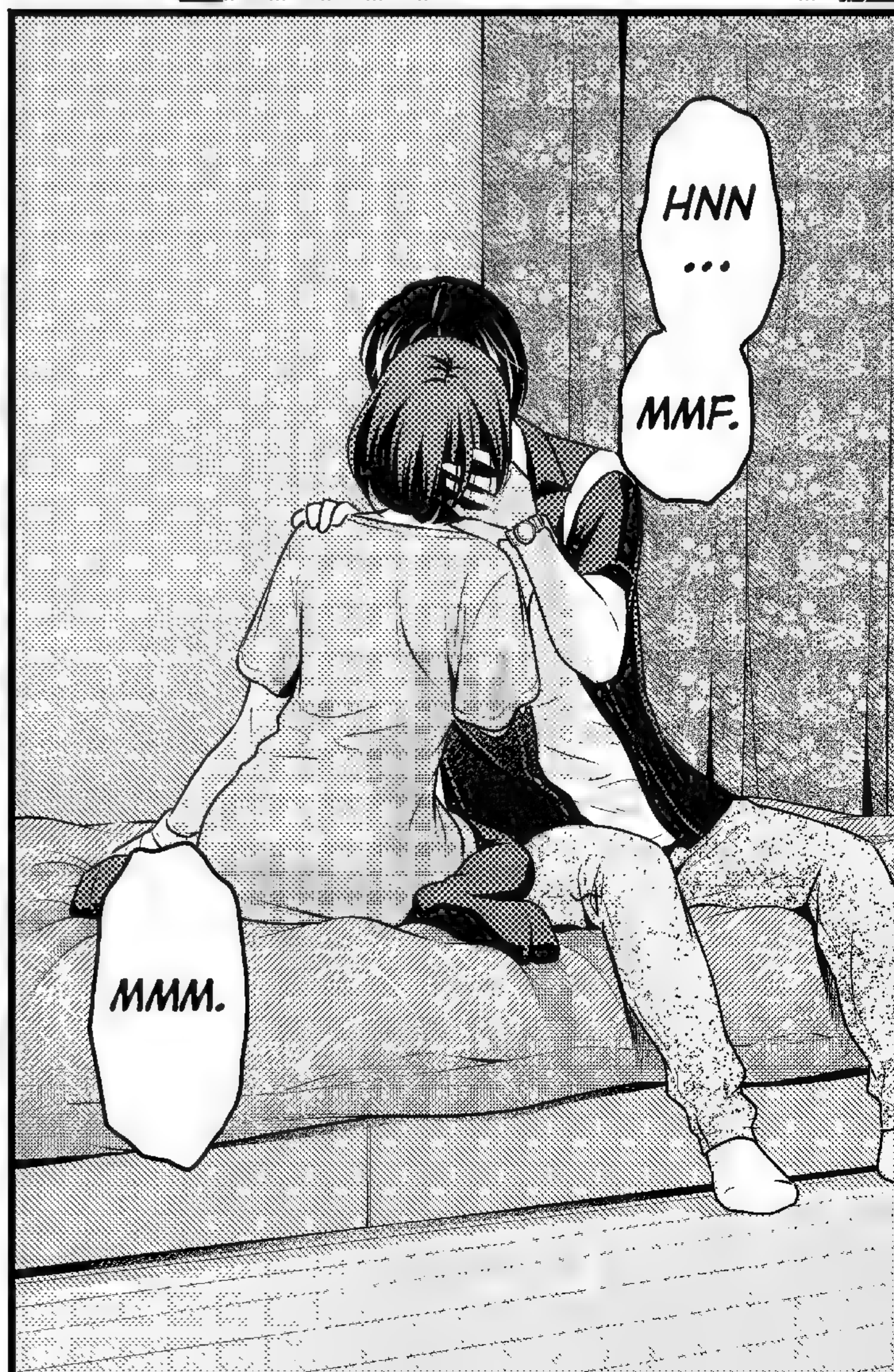
I
JUST
...

...DIDN'T
WANT YOU
TO WORRY.



NAT-
SUO
...







DON'T WANT TO?



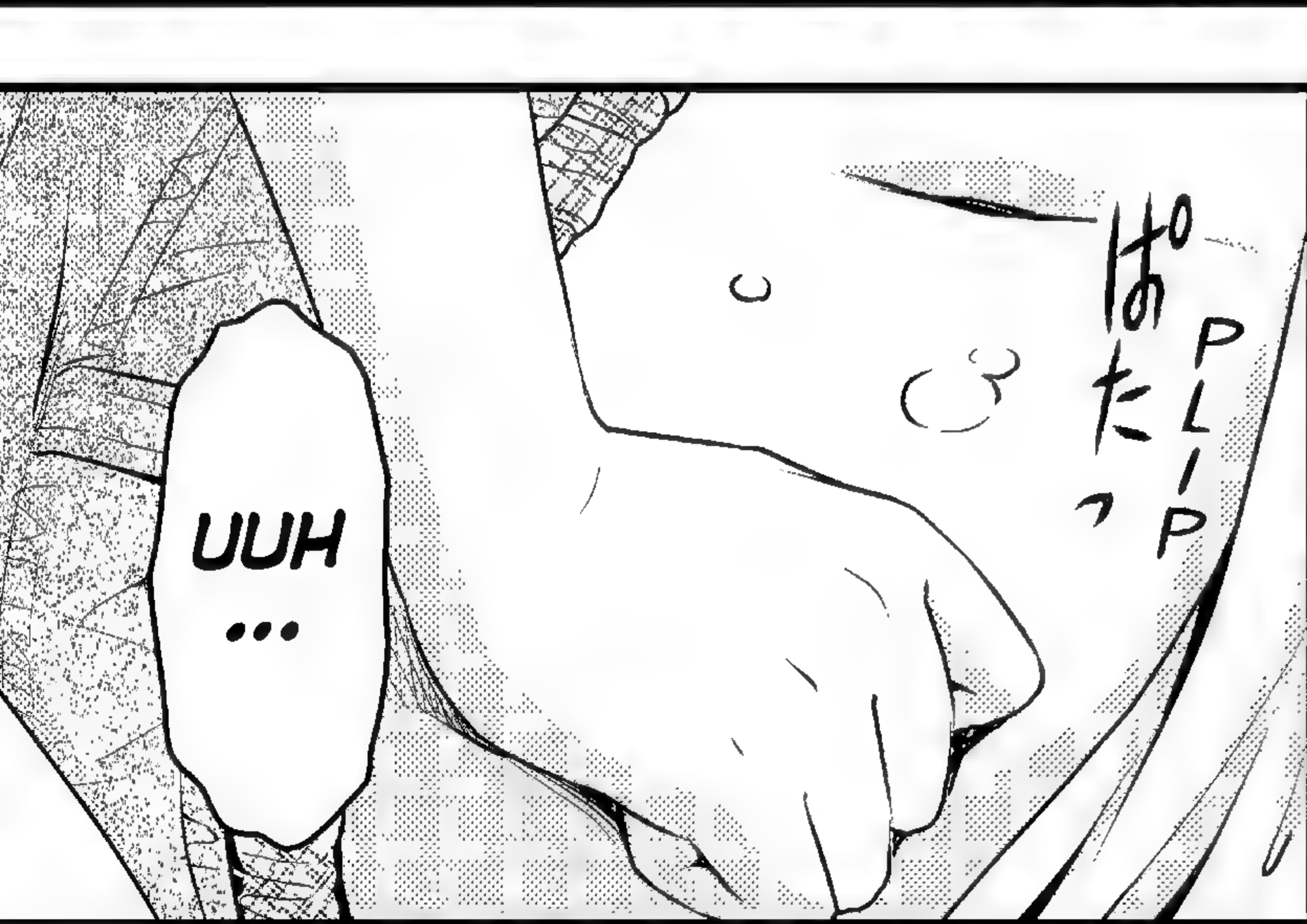
RUI ...



...

IT'S NOT THAT.

JUST ...



UHH ...

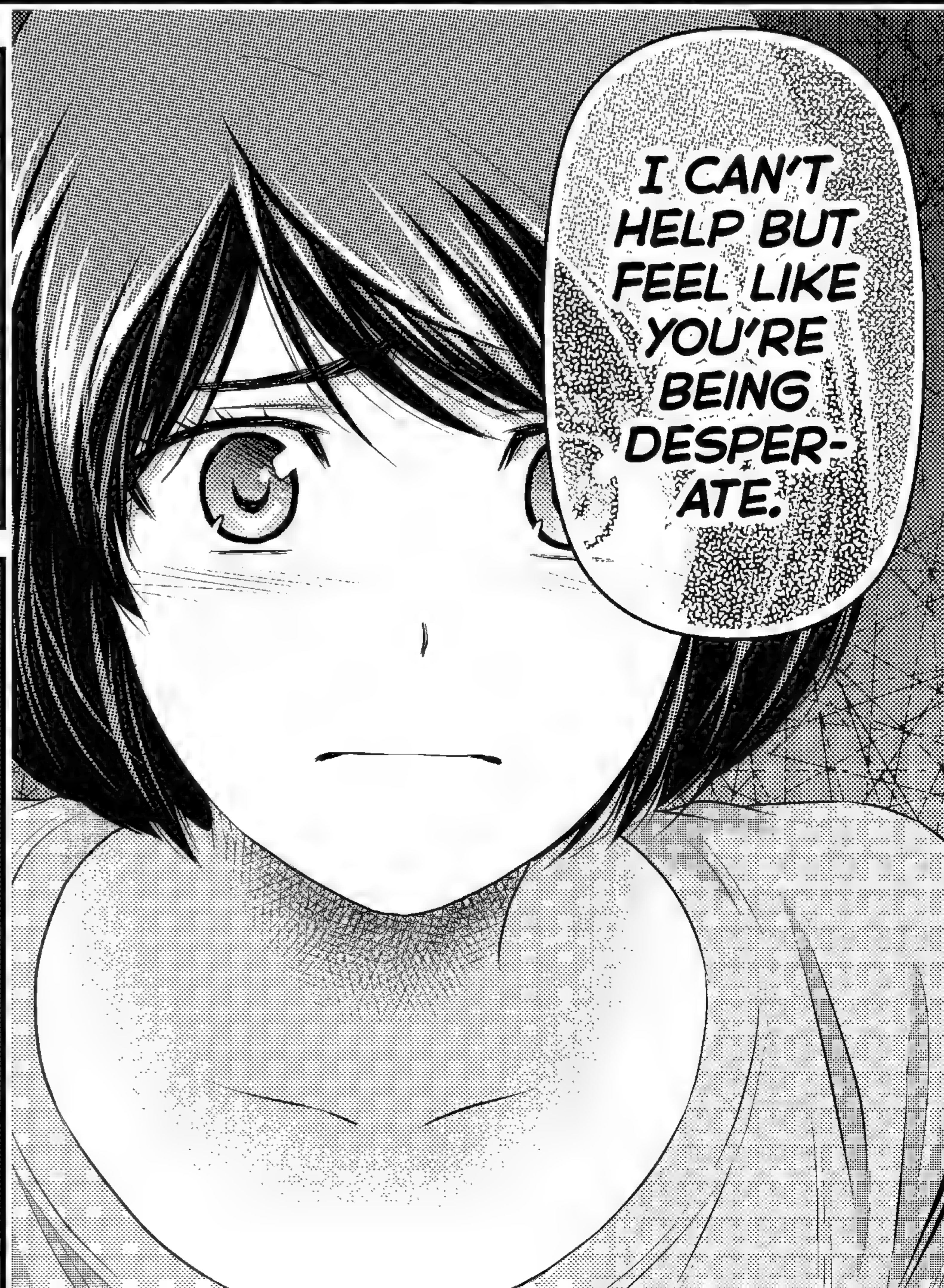
HOP LIP



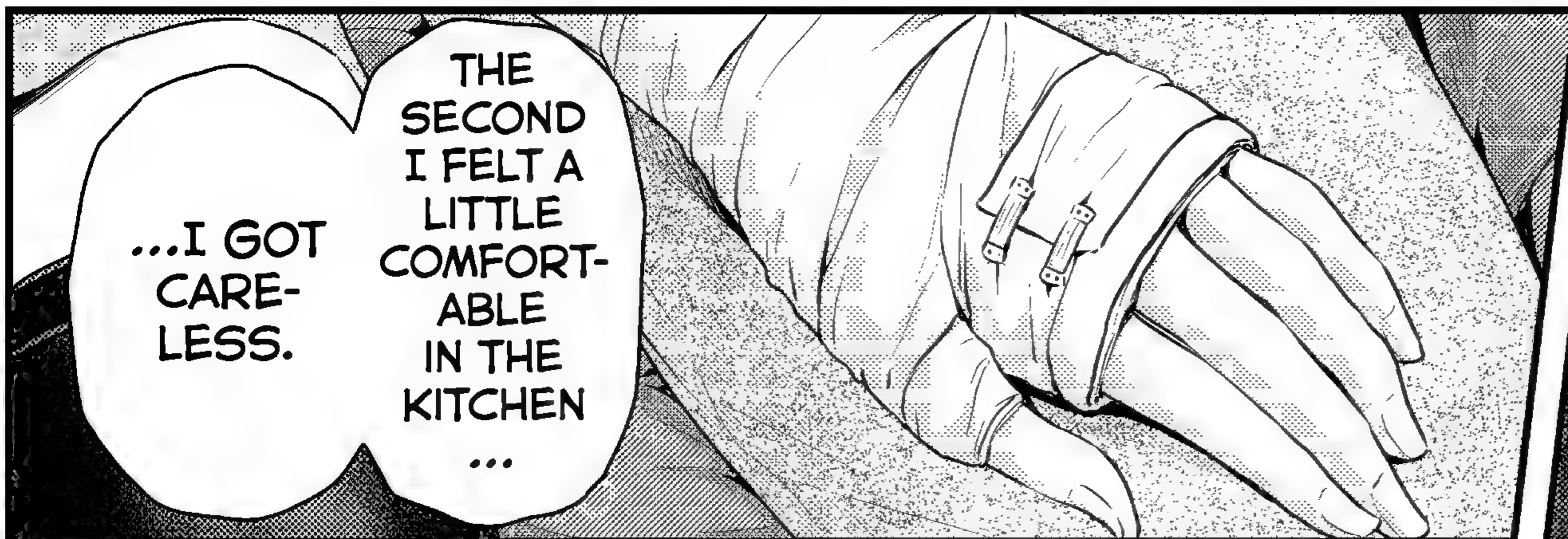
UNH ...

FUU.

HNH ...



I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL LIKE YOU'RE BEING DESPERATE.



...I GOT CARE-LESS.

THE SECOND I FELT A LITTLE COMFORT-ABLE IN THE KITCHEN ...



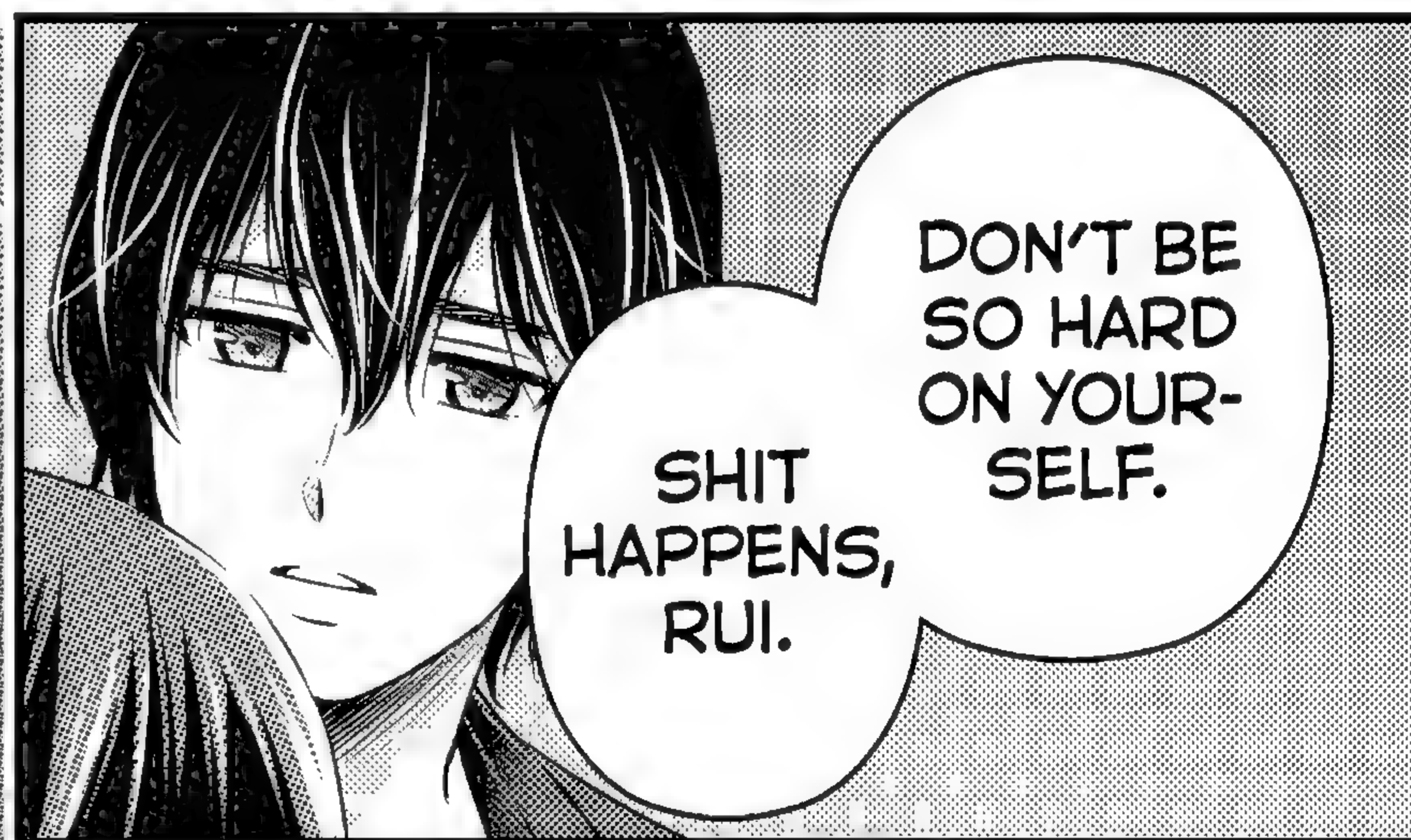
IT'S TOTALLY MY OWN FAULT.

I LET MY MIND WANDER AND DIDN'T PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT I WAS DOING.



I NEVER IMAGINED ...

...I'D LOSE THE ABILITY TO WORK SOMEDAY. NOT LIKE THIS.



SHIT HAPPENS, RUI.

DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF.



IT WAS A PART OF MY IDENTITY.

AND NOW IT'S GONE.

I'LL ADMIT I FELT A LITTLE JEALOUS SOMETIMES WHEN YOU TALKED ABOUT COLLEGE,

BUT I LIKED MY JOB.



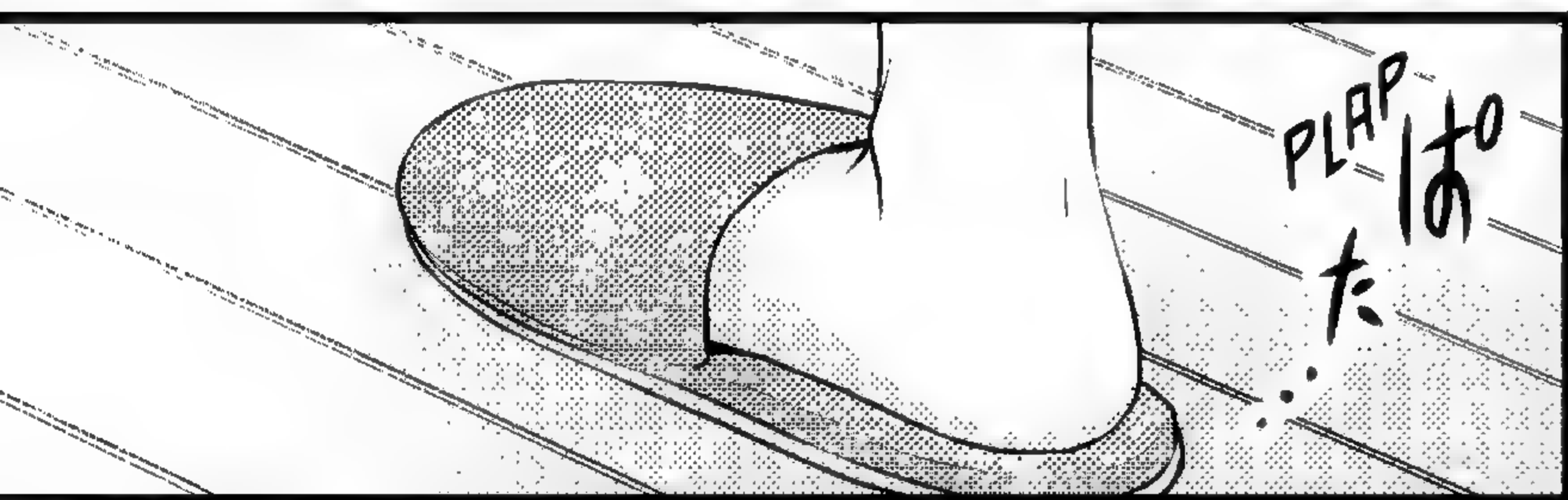
EVERY-
THING
WILL BE
FINE.

IT'S
ALL
RIGHT,
RUI.



DON'T
WORRY.

I'M SURE
THINGS
WILL GET
BETTER.

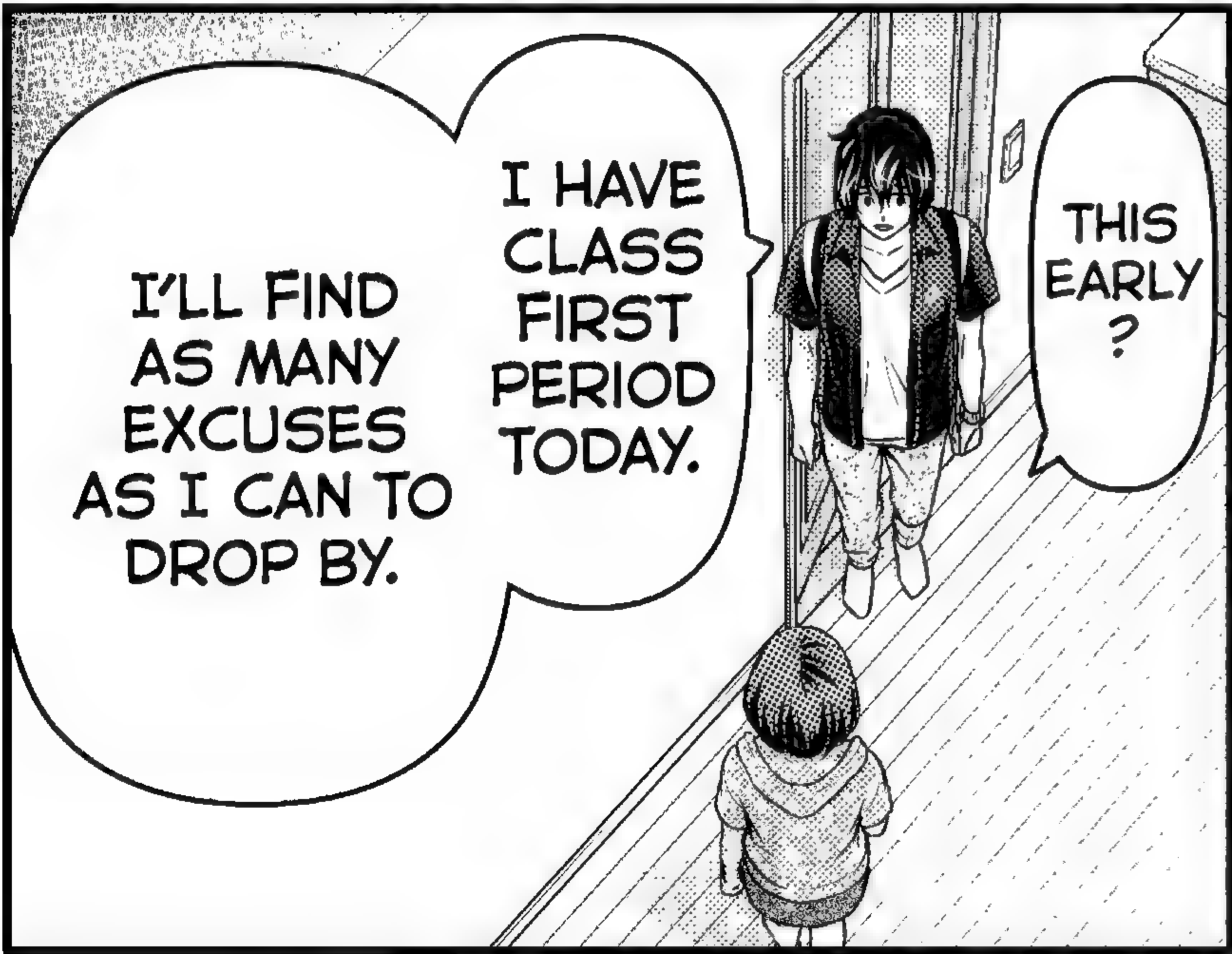
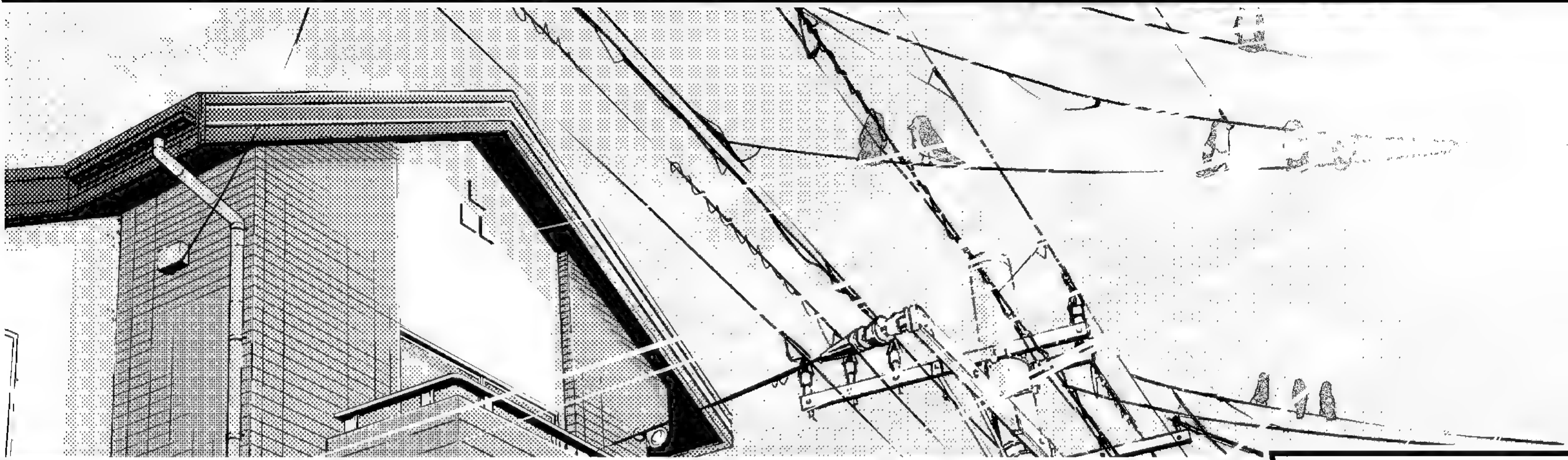


PLAP
た
た



NO
MATTER
WHAT
HAPPENS
...

...I'LL
ALWAYS BE
HERE FOR
YOU.





RUI...



I WANNA
STAY WITH
YOU ALL
DAY, TOO,
BUT...

DON'T
GET ME
WRONG,



DON'T
GO...



HAVE A
GOOD
DAY.

JUST
KID-
DING.



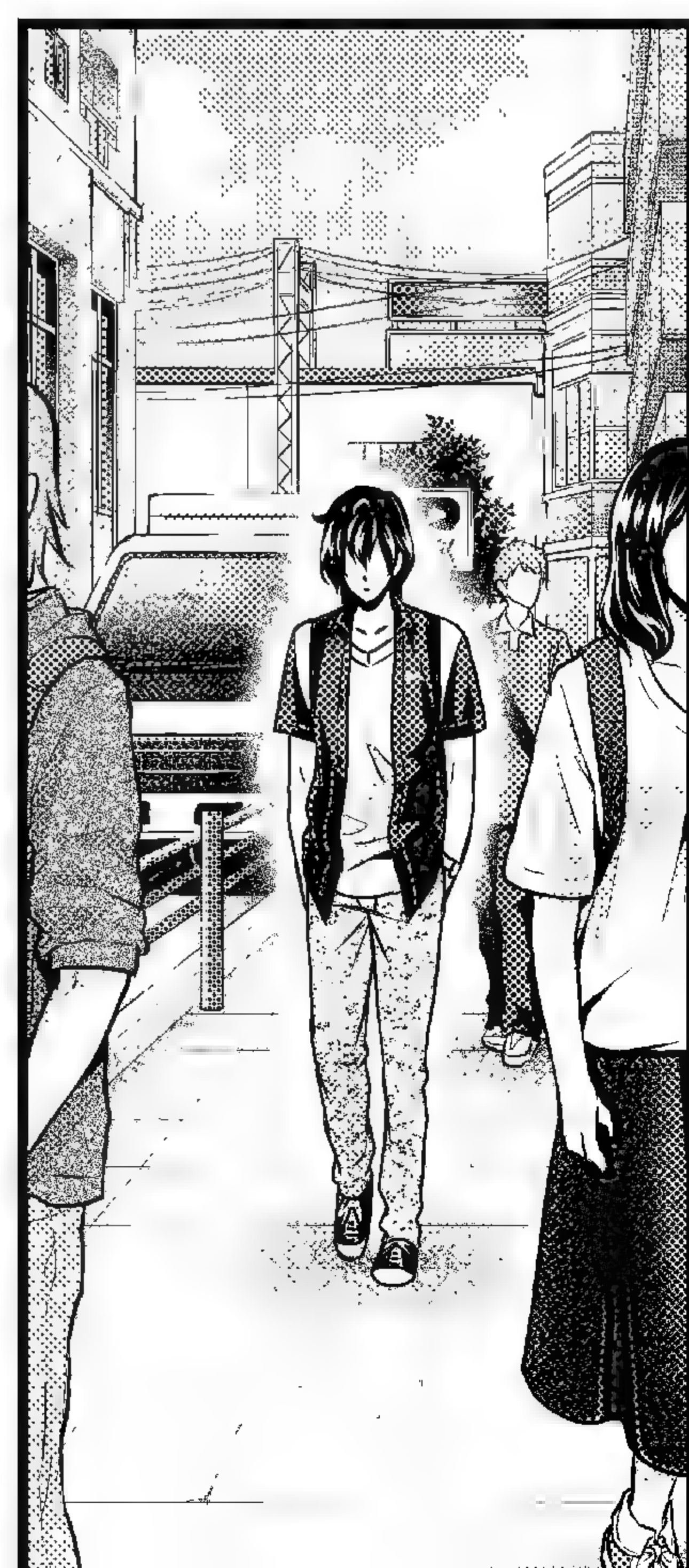
I HAVE TO
SUPPORT
RUI IN
ANY WAY
I CAN!

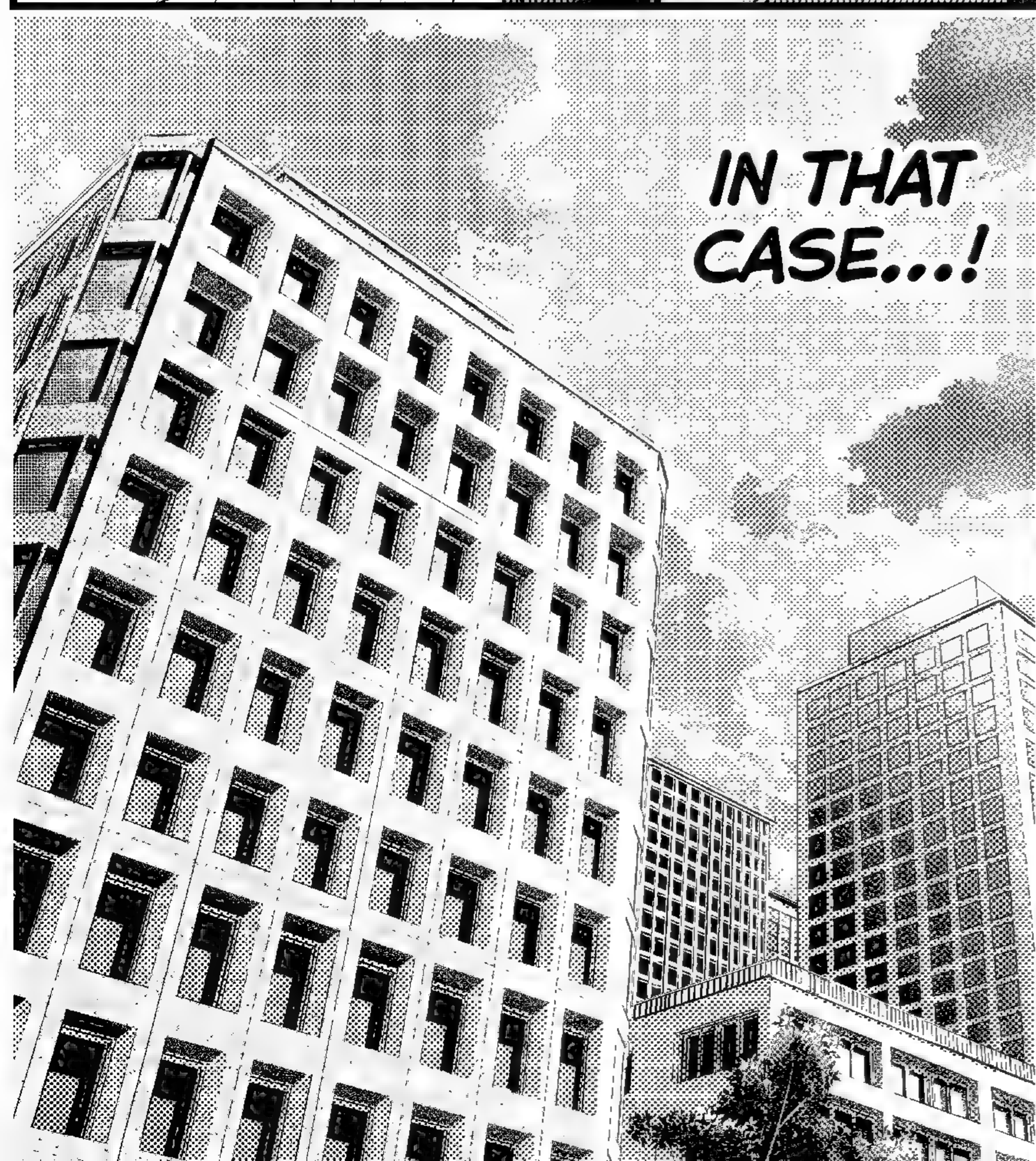
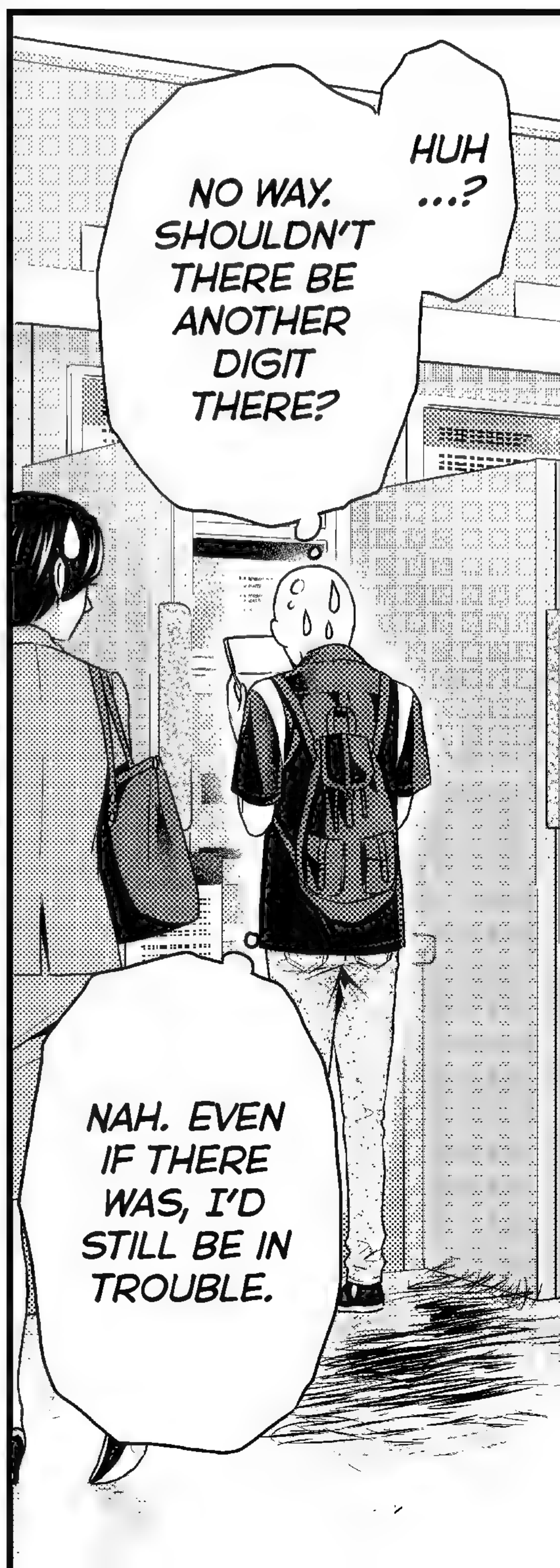
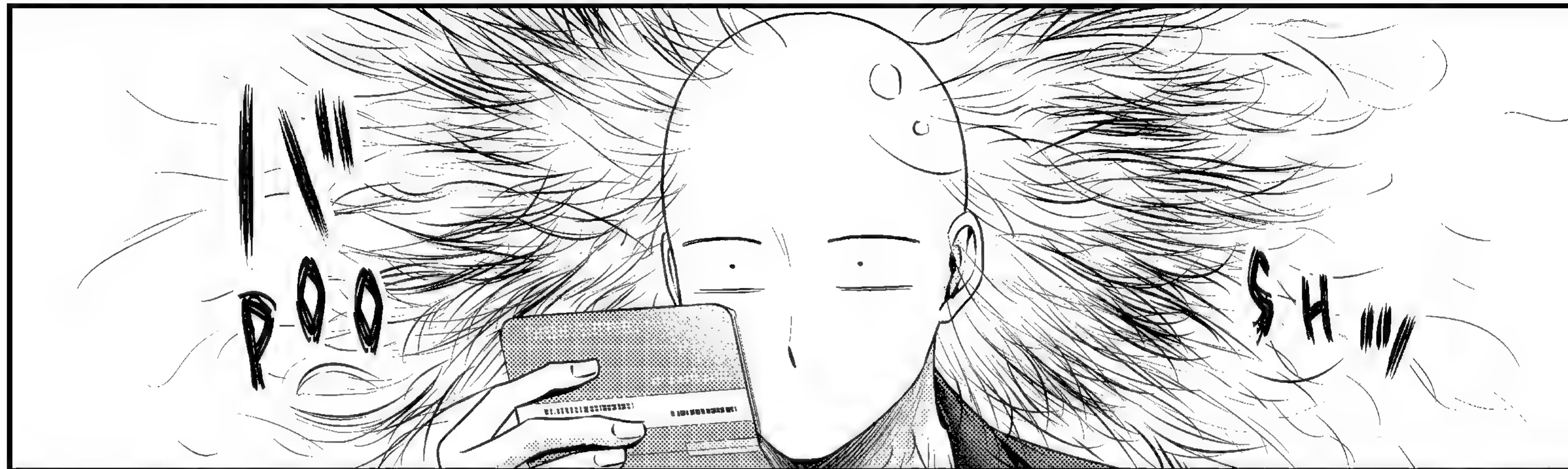


AT TIMES
LIKE THESE,
I'VE GOTTA
KEEP IT
TOGETHER
AS HER
BOYFRIEND.

IN EVERY
SENSE.

RUI
SEEMED
PRETTY
WOR-
RIED.







KIRIYA-KUN WENT TO SEE IT ONE NIGHT AND TOLD ME ABOUT IT. SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS A HIT.

YEAH.



HEEEY. LONG TIME NO SEE!



I WAS WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE SHORT I SUBMITTED BEFORE, MIRROR-LAND?

SO, UM...

THANKS.



ALL DONE WITH YOUR CLUB'S PLAY?



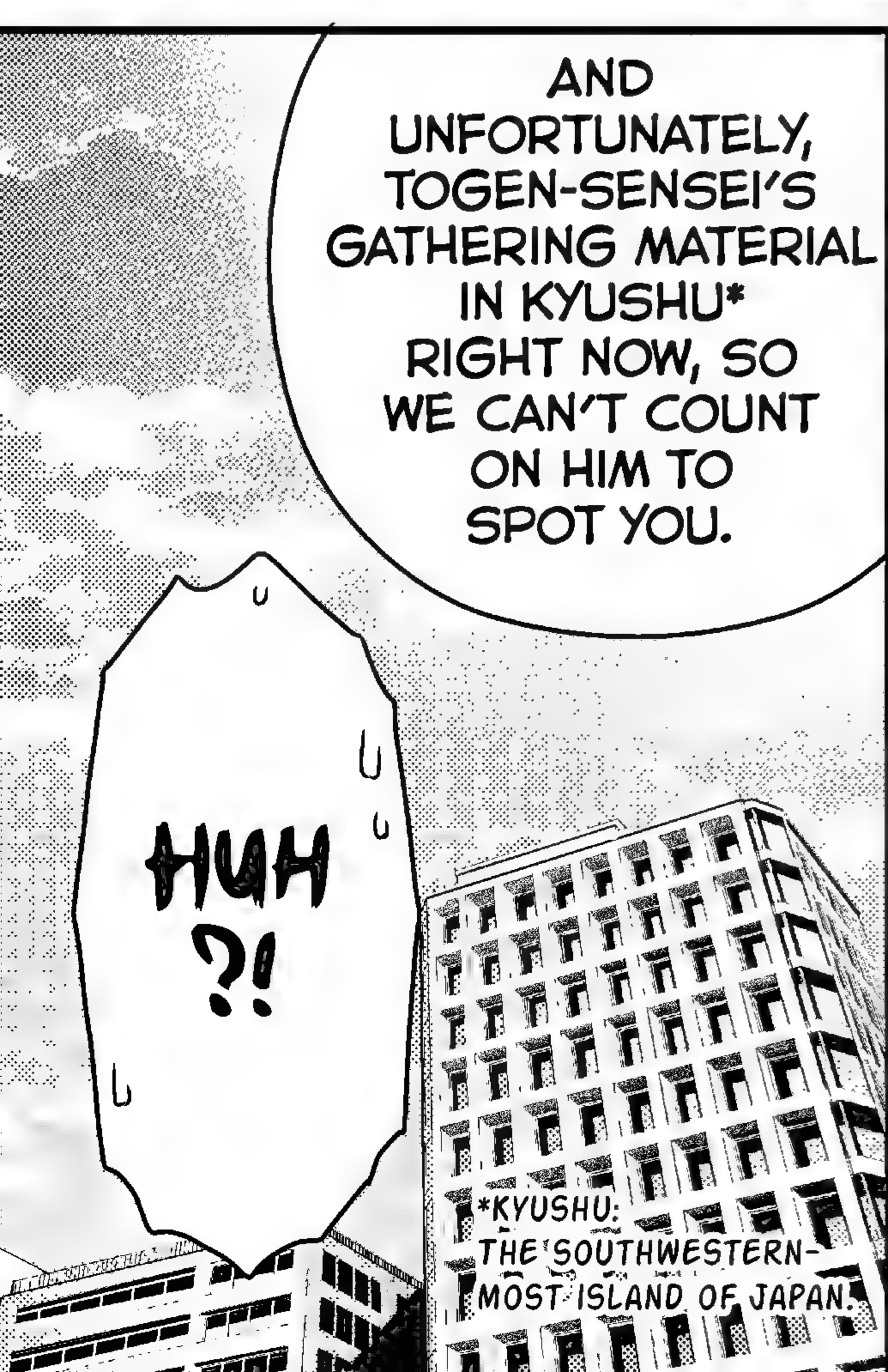
ACTUALLY...

WHAT? ARE YOU TIGHT ON MONEY RIGHT NOW?

SO, ABOUT THE MANUSCRIPT FEE...
THANK GOD!



OHH. RIGHT, RIGHT! IT GOT THE OKAY TO BE PUBLISHED. TOO.
THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF LIKED IT, TOO.



AND UNFORTUNATELY, TOGEN-SENSEI'S GATHERING MATERIAL IN KYUSHU* RIGHT NOW, SO WE CAN'T COUNT ON HIM TO SPOT YOU.

HUH ?!

*KYUSHU: THE SOUTHWESTERN-MOST ISLAND OF JAPAN.



WRITERS DON'T GET PAID UNTIL TWO MONTHS AFTER THE PUBLICATION DATE.

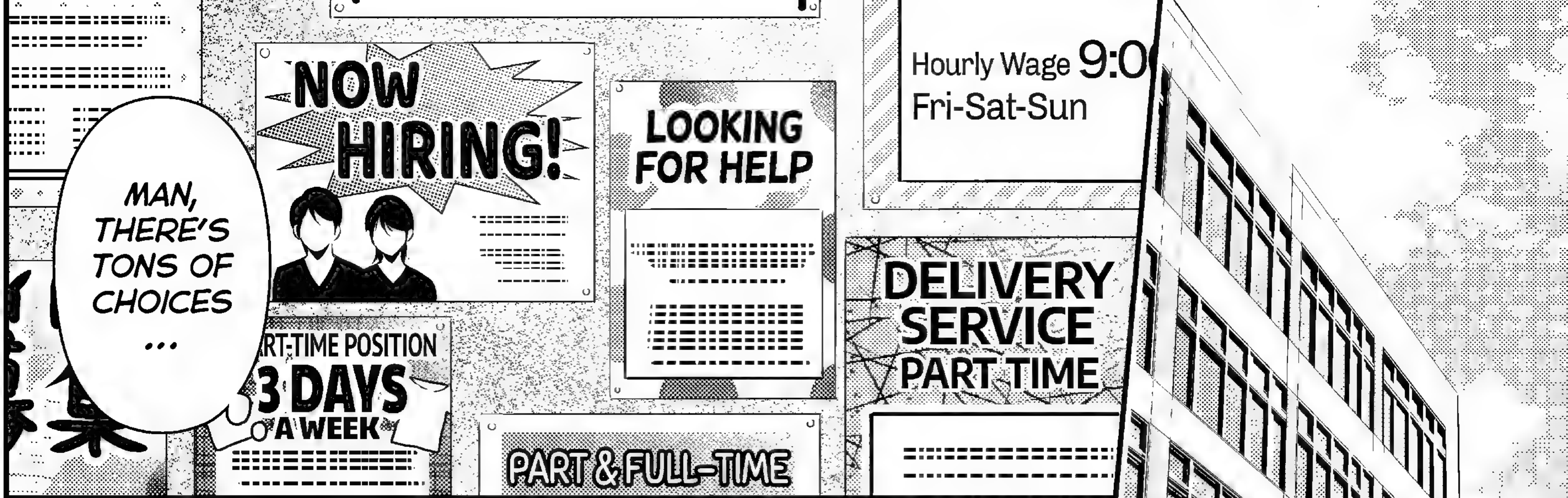
YOU WON'T BE SEEING A DIME ANYTIME SOON.

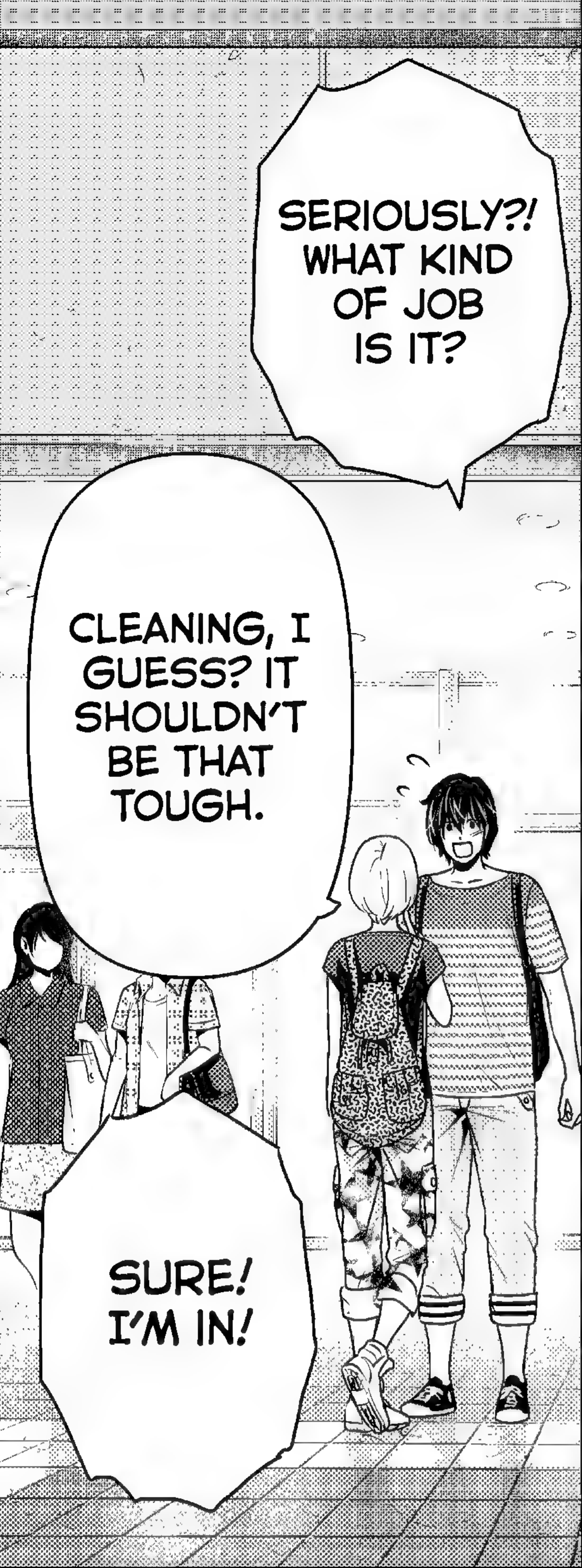
ER...



SERIOUSLY ?!

CLAT





SERIOUSLY?!
WHAT KIND
OF JOB
IS IT?

CLEANING, I
GUESS? IT
SHOULDN'T
BE THAT
TOUGH.

SURE!
I'M IN!



REALLY?!
I'VE GOT A
PRETTY GOOD
PART-TIME
GIG THIS
WEEKEND!

WANNA
DO IT
WITH
ME?!



SO, I
MANAGED
TO FIND A
JOB...



I'LL
SEND
YOU THE
DETAILS
LATER.

OKAY.
I'LL
SIGN
YOU UP,
THEN!

THANKS
A LOT!



HUH
...

...AND I'M
GONNA EAT
DINNER HERE
FOR A WHILE
TO SAVE
MONEY ON
FOOD.



HEY.

UH-HUH.

GLAD
THAT I'M
BROKE?

I'M
JUST
GLAD.

WHAT'S
WITH
THAT
LOOK?



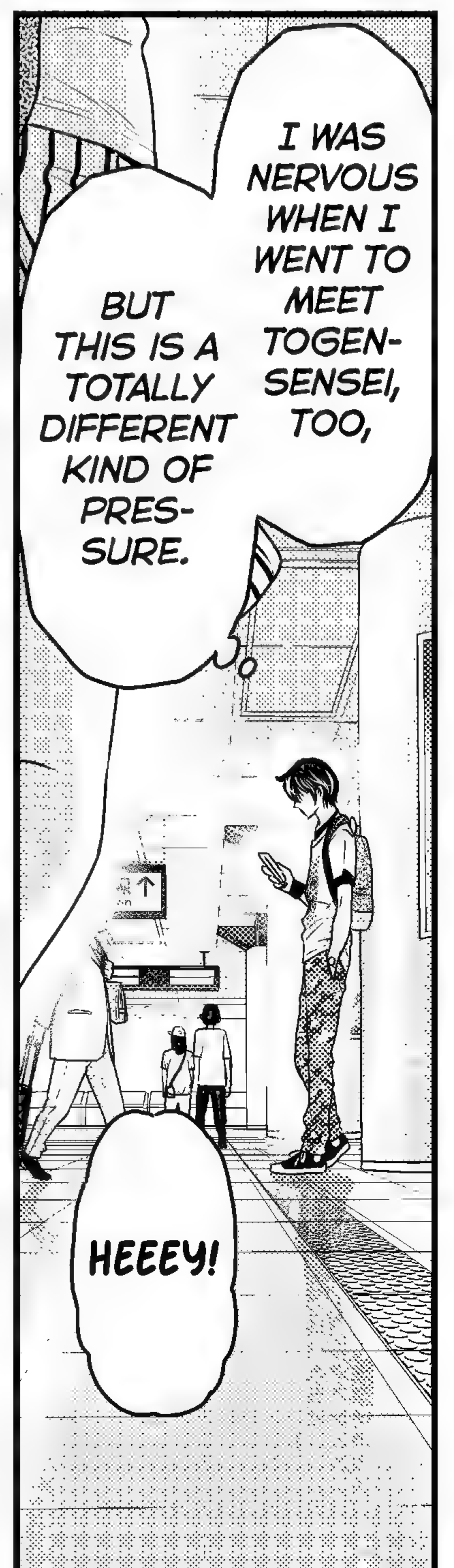
OKAY
...

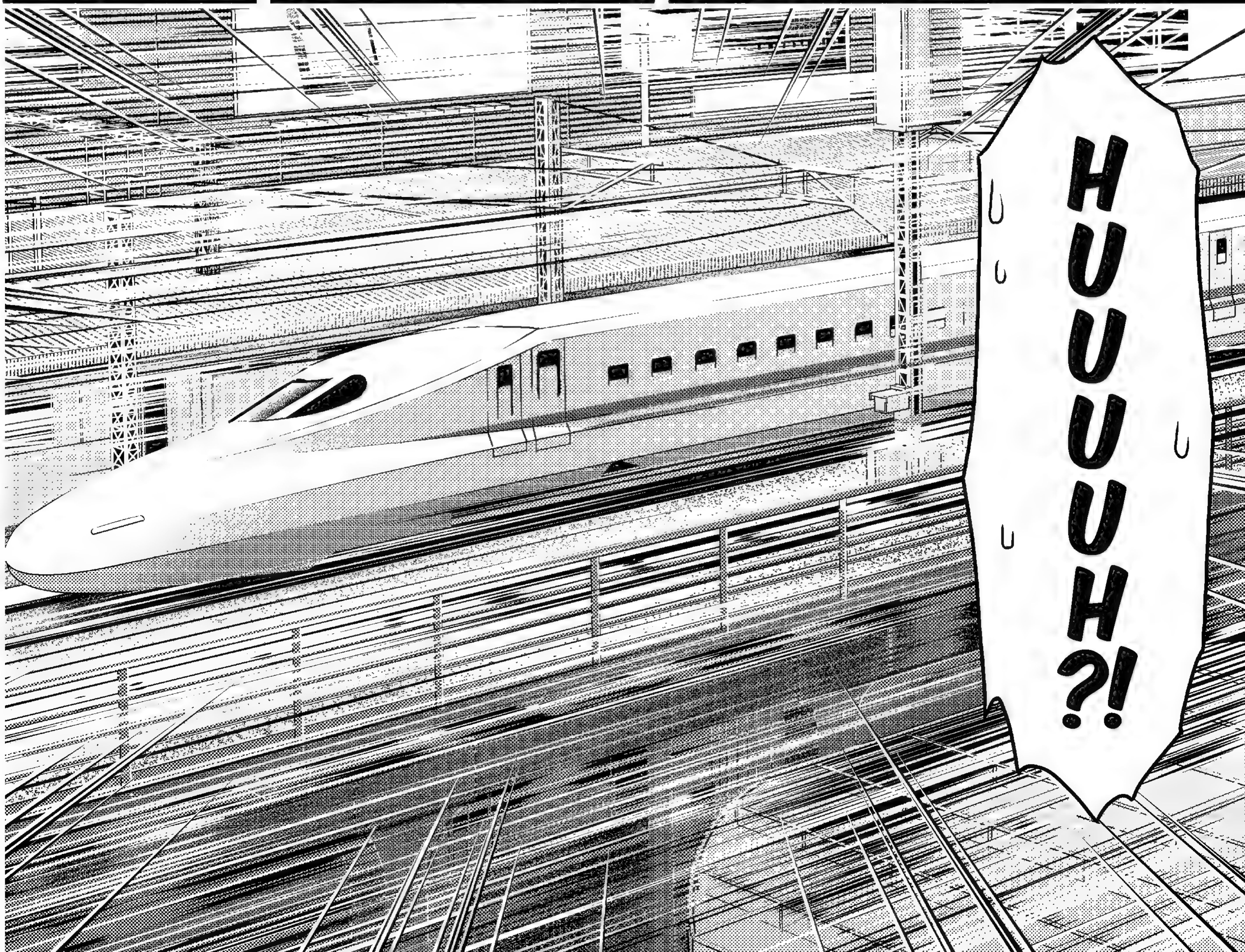


...SO YOU
SHOULD
JUST TAKE
IT EASY FOR
A WHILE,
OKAY?

WELL,

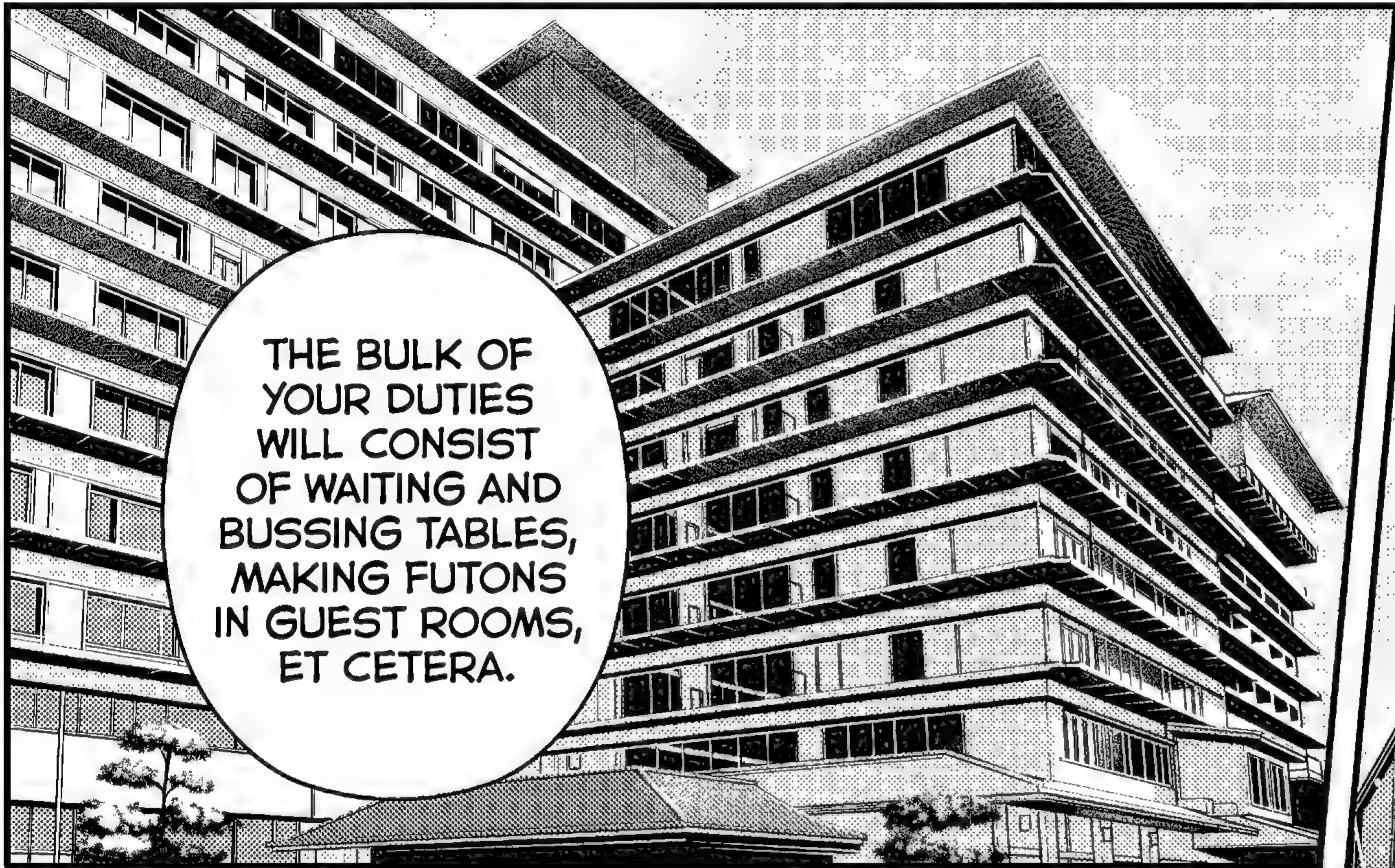
I PROMISED
TO DO YOUR
CHORES IN
EXCHANGE
FOR TRAIN
FARE, TOO...







CHAPTER 160: COMFORT TO THE TROUBLED





ER...
CUP-
YOU MEAN
WE'RE
GONNA
SHARE A
ROOM?!

UH-HUH.



WHAT'S
THE BIG
DEAL?
C'MON,
WE HAVE
WORK
TO DO!

WE CAN'T
DO THAT!
EVEN AS
CLASS-
MATES, A
GUY AND
A GIRL
SHARING
A ROOM
IS...

X X
CHACK



BECAUSE
THEN YOU
MIGHT'VE
SAID NO!

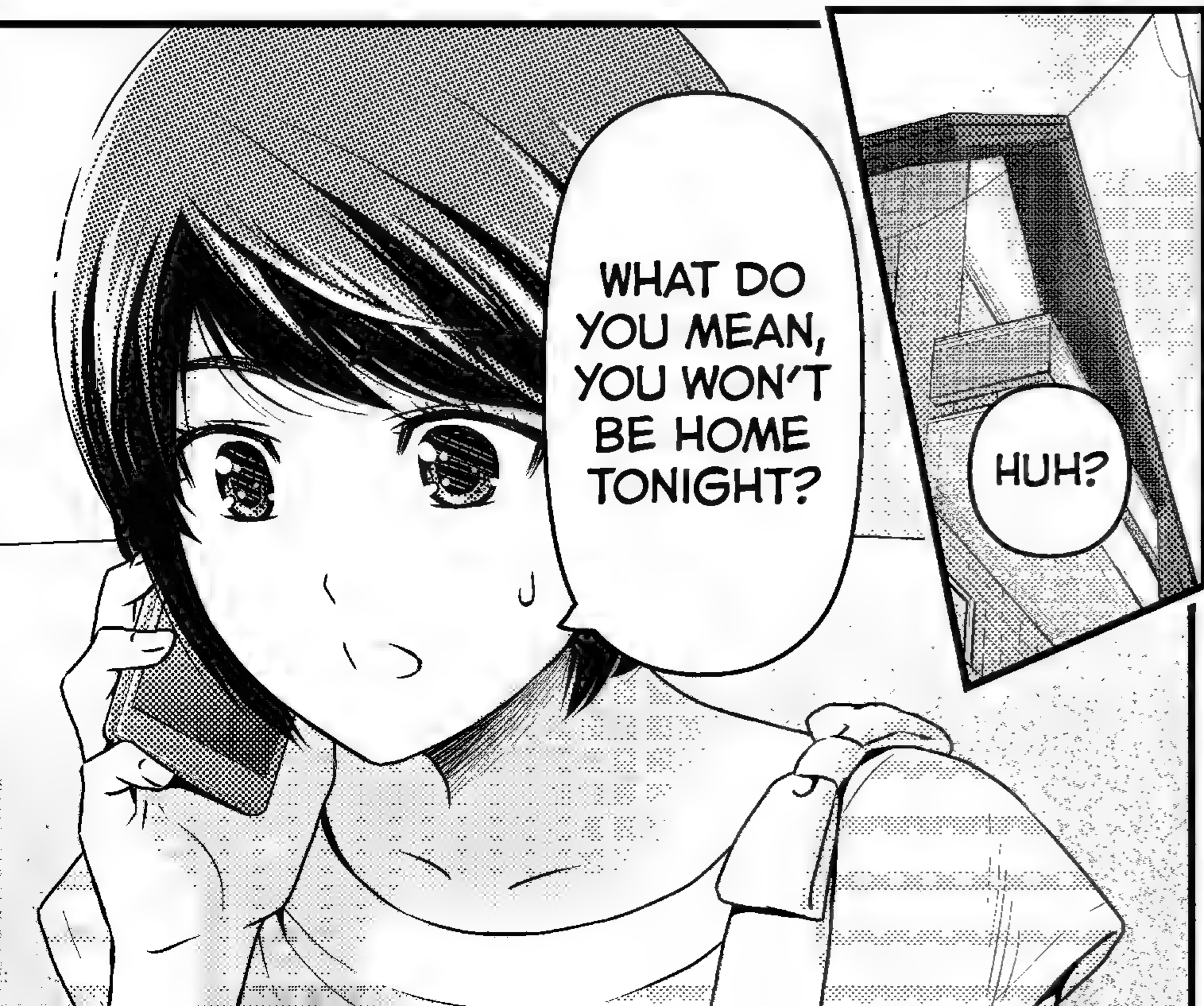
THE AD SAID,
"ROOM FOR
TWO PROVIDED!
COUPLES
WELCOME!"



WANNA
SHARE
ONE?

CAN WE
EVEN FIT
TWO
FUTONS
IN HERE?

NOT
HAPPEN-
ING.

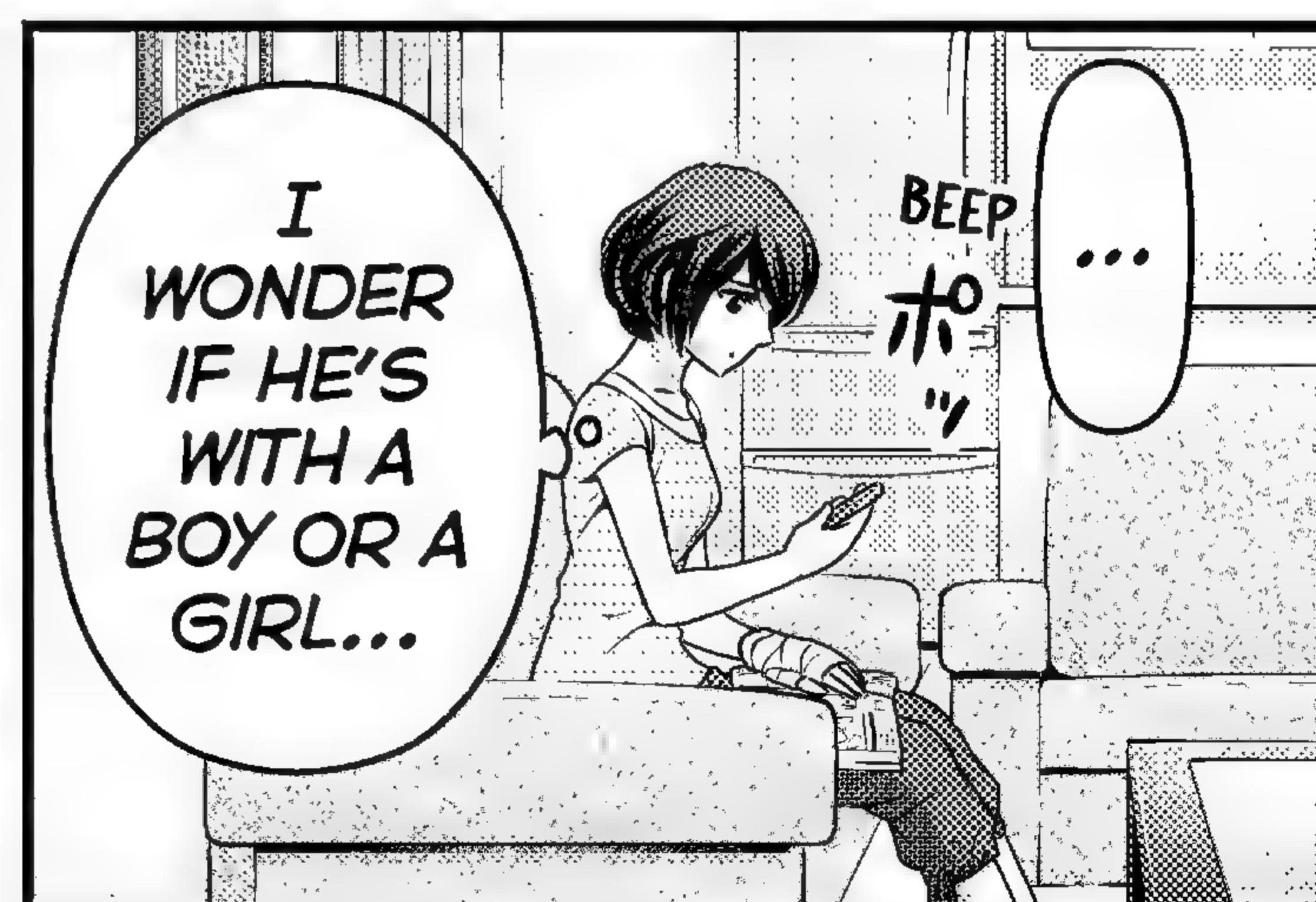
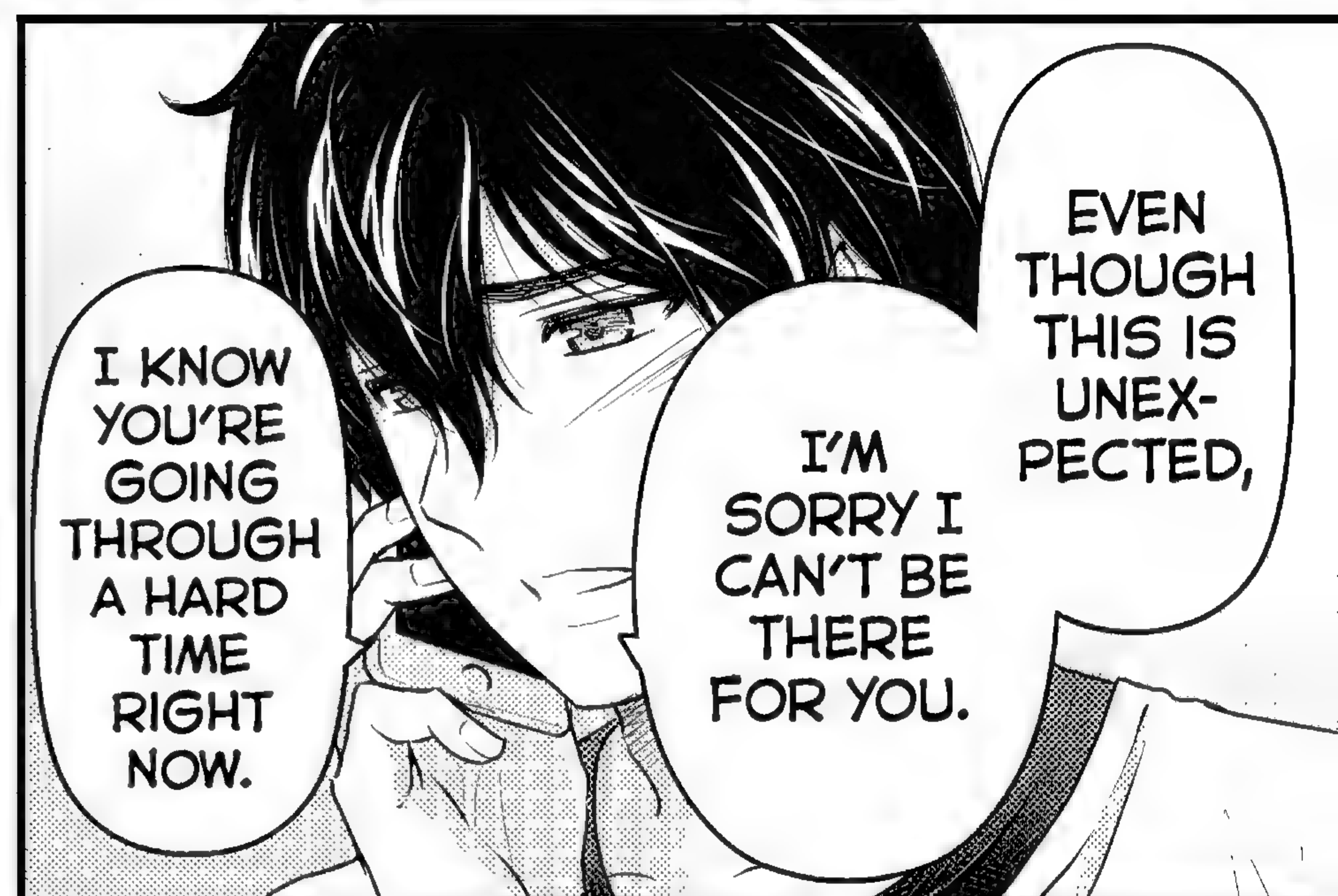


WHAT DO
YOU MEAN,
YOU WON'T
BE HOME
TONIGHT?

HUH?



IT'S A
BOX!





WHA-

SHE
CHEERED
ME ON, BUT
SHE SURE
SOUNDED
DOWN.

NO WONDER.
I JUST TOLD
HER I'D BE
AROUND THE
HOUSE MORE
OFTEN, TOO.



チャッ...
CHACK



BUT
WE'RE A
COUPLE
TODAY.

I CARE!

YOU
SHOULD
GET
CHANGED
TOO,
NAT-KUN!
IT'S NO
BIGGIE,
I DON'T
CARE.

NO,
WE MOST
DEFINITELY
ARE NOT!



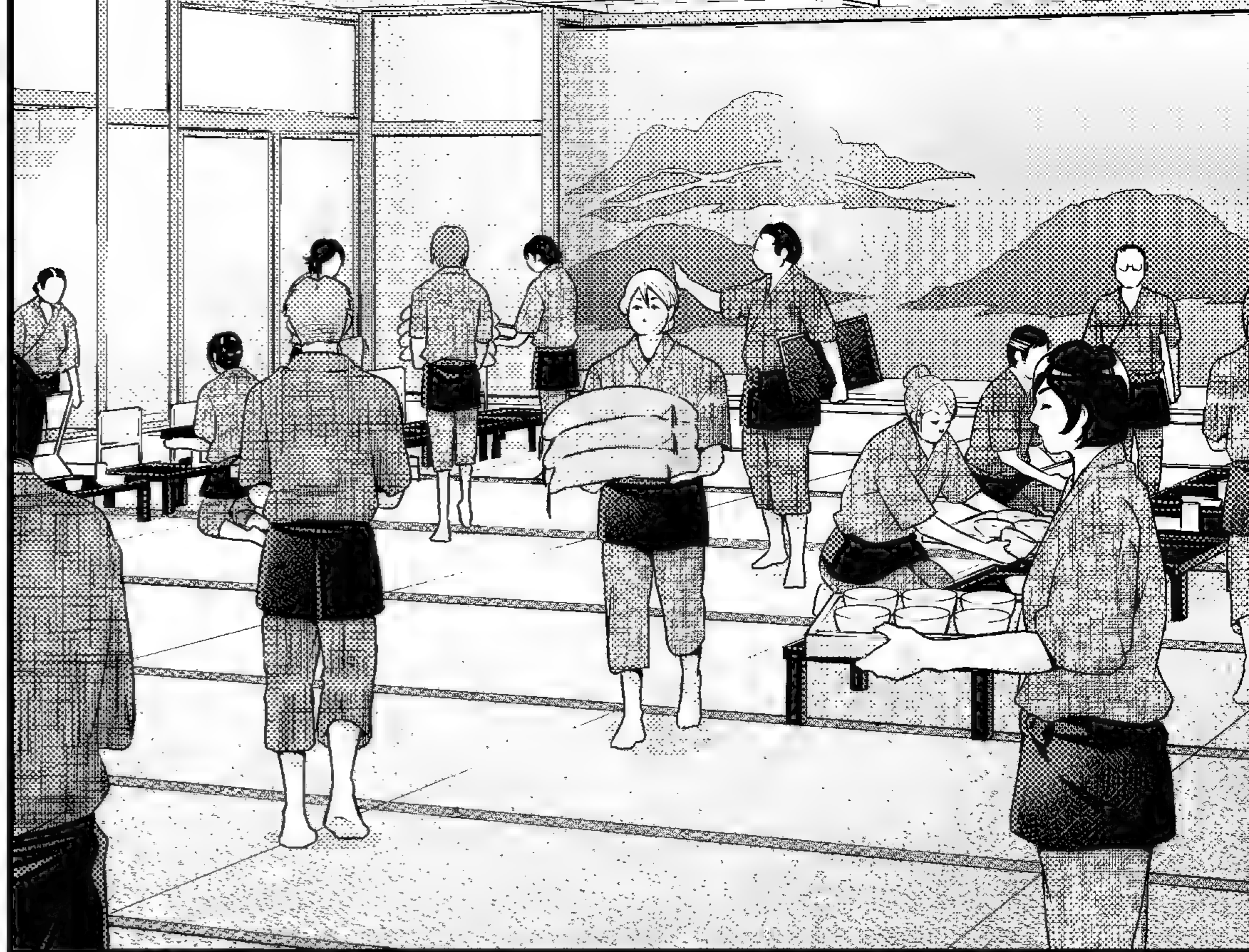
HWAAAH!
SORRY!

SLAM



PICK UP THE PACE, PEOPLE!

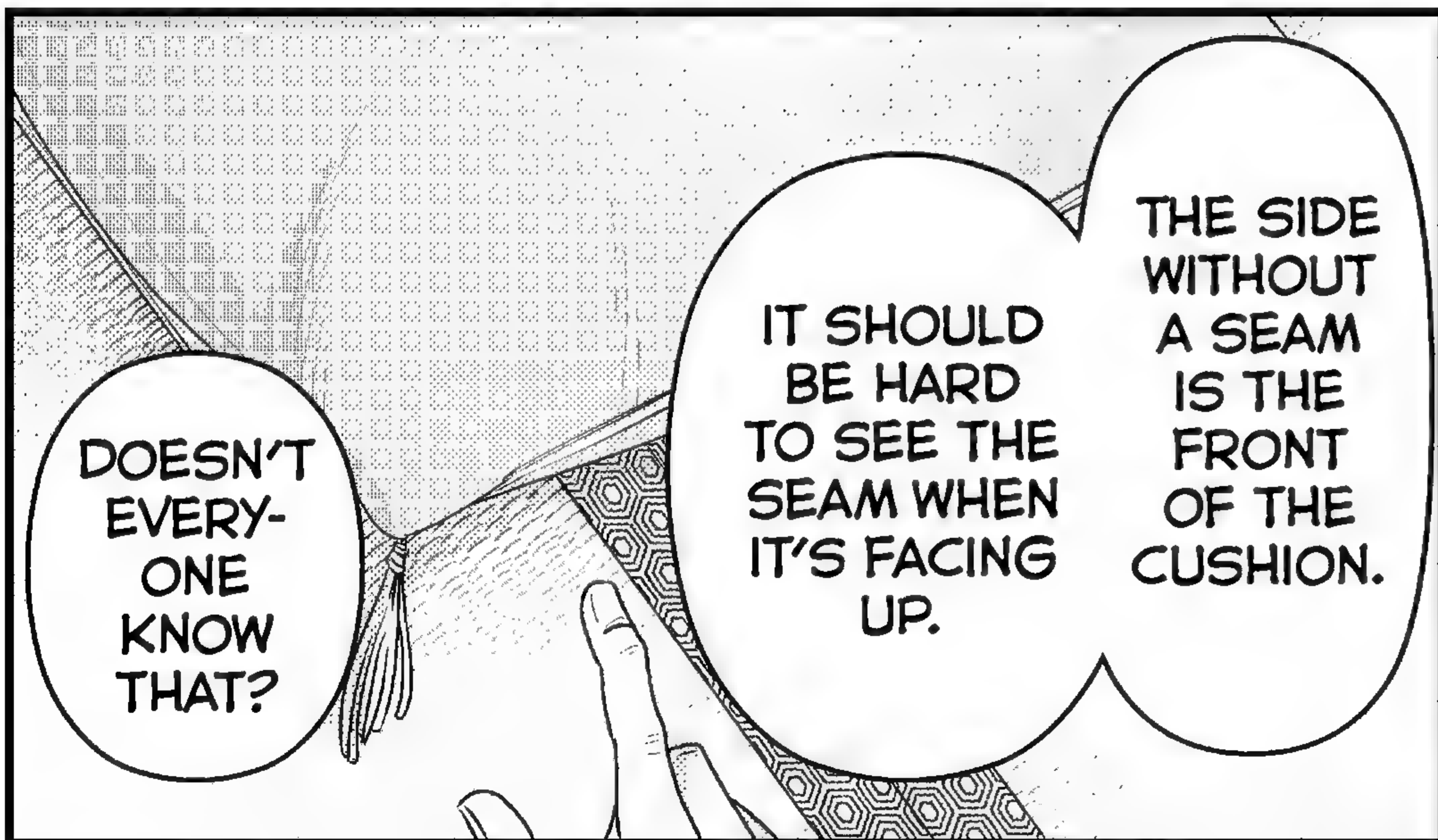
WE HAVE TWO MORE RECEPTION ROOMS TO SET UP AFTER THIS.



THOSE ARE FACING THE WRONG WAY!

WHOA, WHOA!

AH!



DOESN'T EVERYONE KNOW THAT?

IT SHOULD BE HARD TO SEE THE SEAM WHEN IT'S FACING UP.

THE SIDE WITHOUT A SEAM IS THE FRONT OF THE CUSHION.



SEND A GROUP TO GO CLEAN THE BATHS WHEN YOU'RE DONE WITH THE RECEPTION ROOMS.

GOT IT.



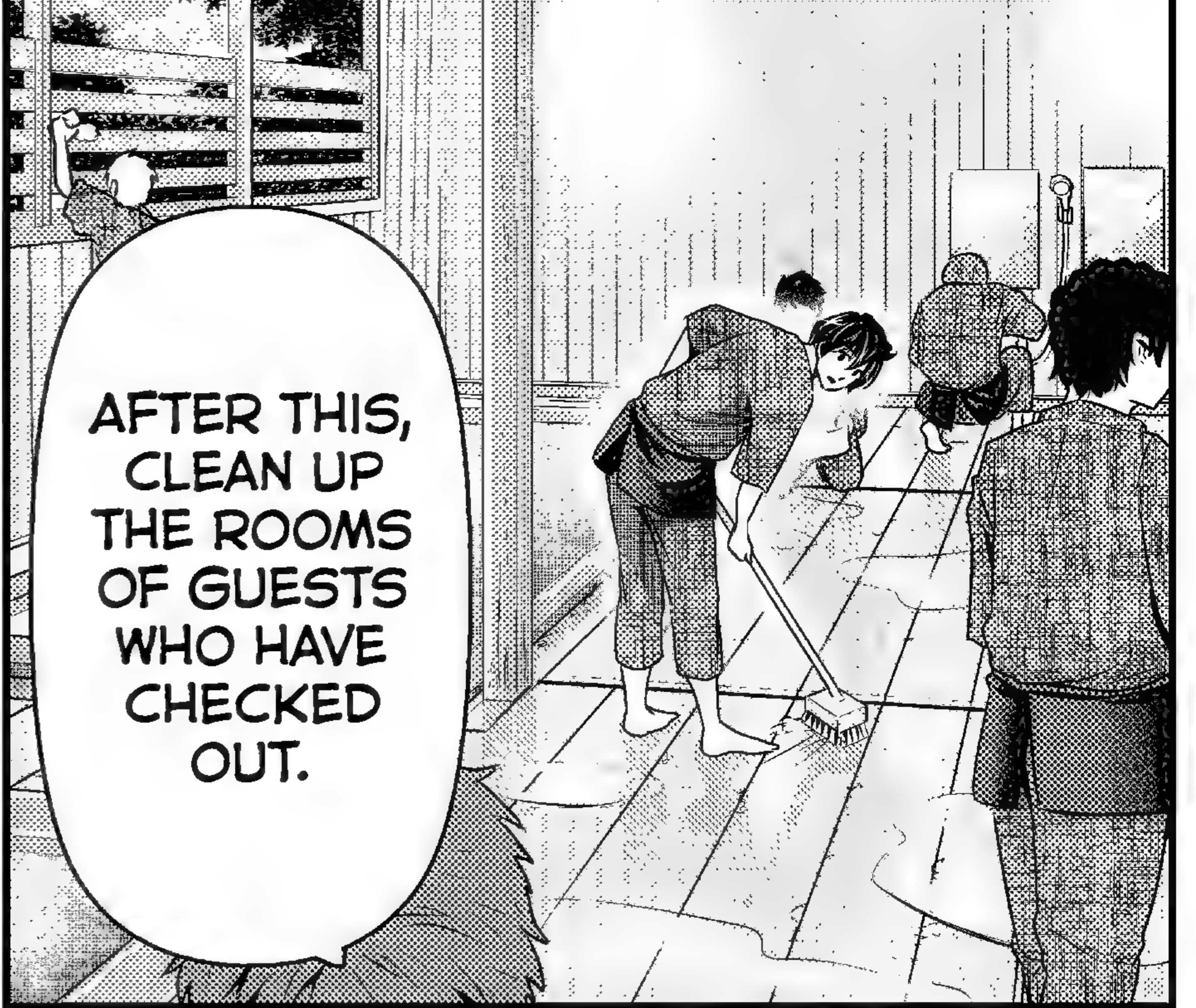
CAN YOU GO AHEAD RESET THEM?

WELL, I GUESS I SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE-HAND.

S-
SORRY!



YES, SIR!



AFTER THIS,
CLEAN UP
THE ROOMS
OF GUESTS
WHO HAVE
CHECKED
OUT.



WELL,
AT LEAST
THE PAY'S
GOOD.

AND OF
COURSE
IT'S TOUGH.
THAT'S WHY
THEY CALL
IT "WORK."

WORKING AT
A RESORT
SOUNDED
LIKE EASY
MONEY, BUT
MAN WAS I
WRONG.



TALK
ABOUT
A RUDE
AWAKEN-
ING.

MY
BACK'S
KILLING
ME...



MAKING A
LIVING...

...IS
HARDER
THAN IT
SOUNDS.



I
THOUGHT
I KNEW
THAT.





SHE'S
PRETTY
DEPRESSED
ABOUT IT...

SHE
WORKS
AS A
CHEF,

BUT SHE'S
TAKING
TIME OFF
BECAUSE
SHE CUT
HER HAND
BADLY AND
NEEDED
OVER 20
STITCHES.



NIGHT.

TALK
TO YOU
LATER.

OKAY.



OH...

HUH
?

WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOUR
GIRL-
FRIEND'S
HAND?



HOW DO YOU
PLAN TO
CHEER HER
UP IF YOU'RE
DOWN, TOO?

I WANT TO
STAY BY HER
SIDE AND
CHEER HER
UP AS MUCH
AS I CAN,
BUT...



WE'RE IN
ATAMI,
Y'KNOW!

"WHERE
?"



ALRIGHTY!
COME ON A
WALK WITH
ME BEFORE
YOU PASS
OUT,
NAT-KUN.

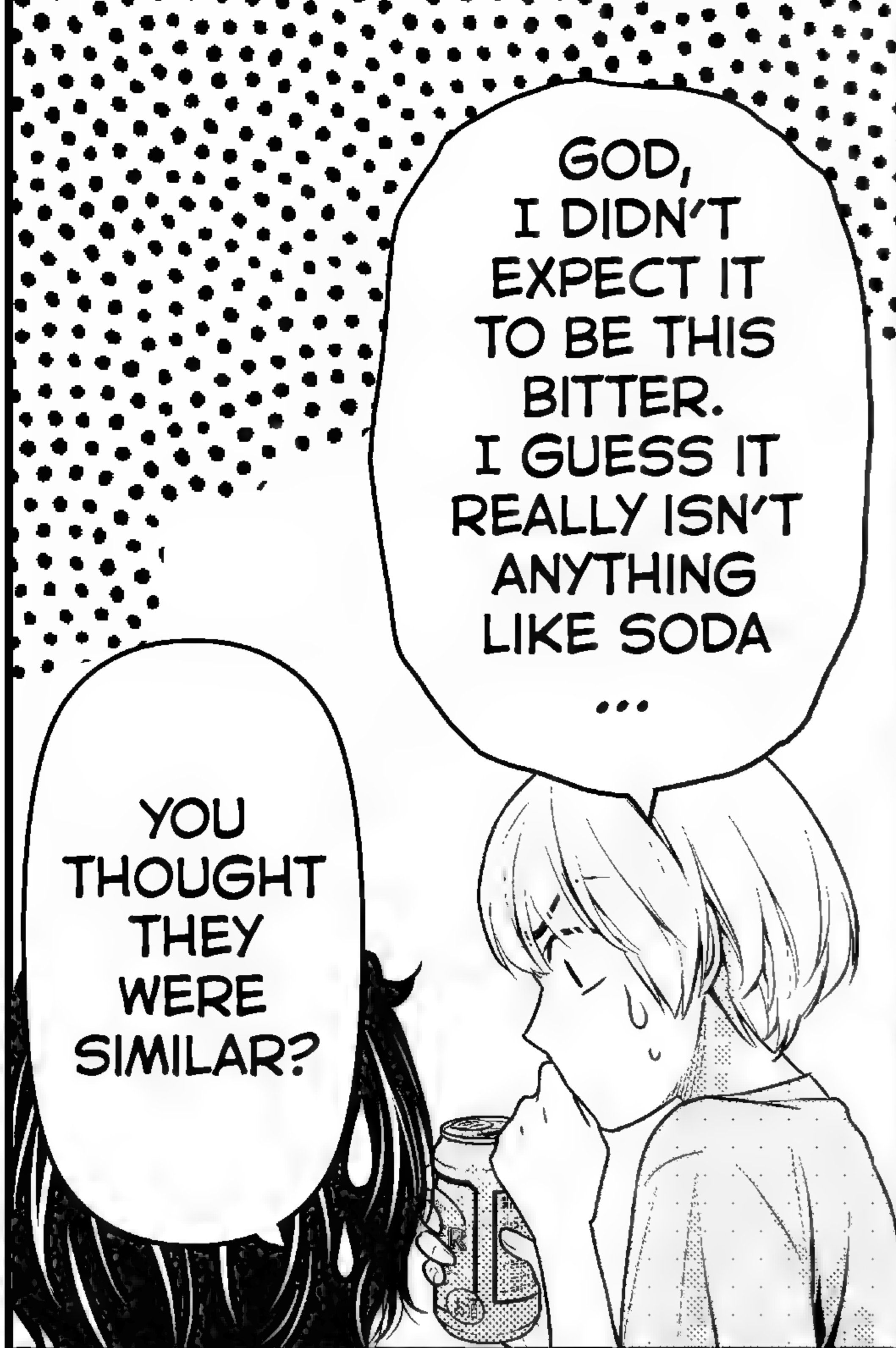
A
WALK?
WHERE
TO?



RIGHT...

...





YOU
THOUGHT
THEY
WERE
SIMILAR?

GOD,
I DIDN'T
EXPECT IT
TO BE THIS
BITTER.
I GUESS IT
REALLY ISN'T
ANYTHING
LIKE SODA
...



IT'S SO
BITTER-
RR!



HEY...
DON'T
OVERDO
IT...

ぐい
GULP

ぐい
GULP

BUT THIS
IS WHAT
YOU CALL
A MATURE
TASTE,
RIGHT?



OOOKEY-
DOKEY!
SINCE
WE'RE AT
THE BEACH
AND ALL
...

...I'LL
COOL
OFF
IN THE
OCEAN!



I FEEL
KINDA HOT.

HUH
?

ARE YOU
DRUNK
ALREADY
?



30B
はっ



YOU
CAN'T STRIP
HERE JUST
BECAUSE
NO ONE
ELSE IS
AROUND!

H-
HOLD UP!
THAT'S A
BAD IDEA!



WHA-

FWIP



N-

NO.

THAT'S
NOT
WHAT I
MEAN...

OR WHAT?
DOES MY
BODY GROSS
YOU OUT OR
SOMETHING?



SLIP...

THEN
THERE'S
NO
PROBLEM



IF I



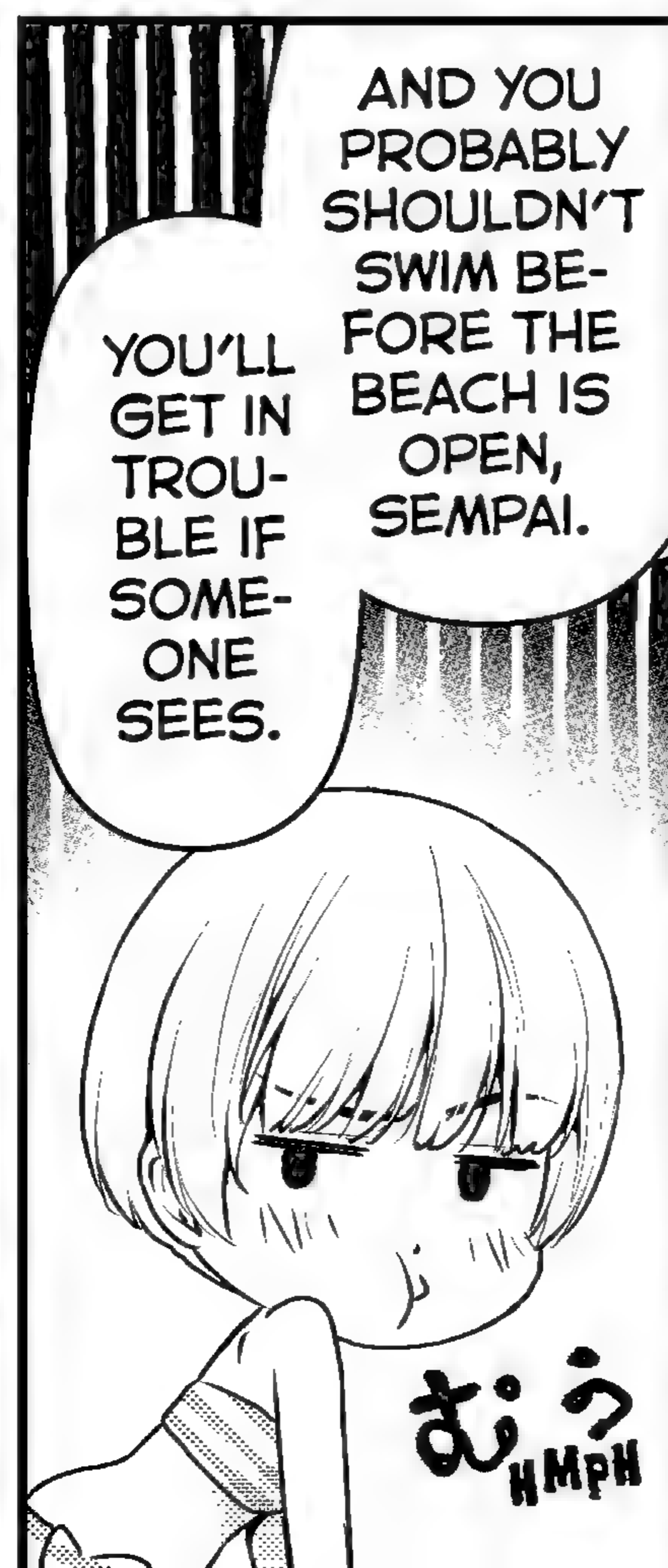
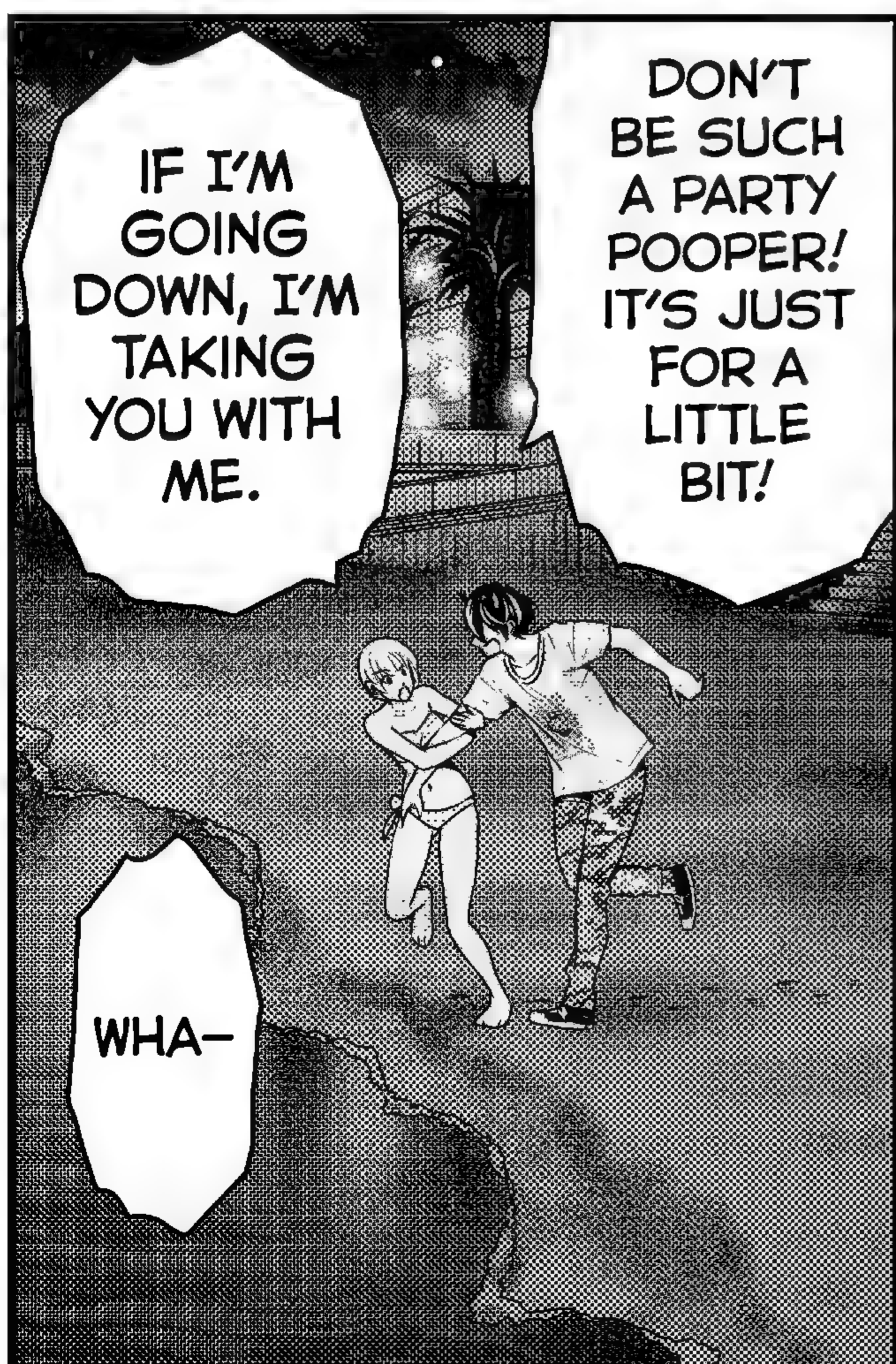
RIGHT
HERE.

TAKE
IT ALL
OFF



WHY NOT?

I DON'T
CARE IF
YOU SEE,
NAT-KUN.





HA, HA.
THAT
WAS NICE
TUMBLE.

NOW
WE'RE IN
THIS TO—



HWAH!



HEY!

SERI-
OUSLY,
KNOCK
IT—



SKY

ボ



SORRY.
IT WAS AN
ACCIDENT.

BUT Y'KNOW,
IT'S KIND OF
IMPRESSIVE
THAT WE WOUND
UP IN THIS
POSITION JUST
FROM FALLING.
YOU COULD
EVEN CALL IT
A TALENT.

PLEASE
JUST GET
OFF!



OH?



YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE ABOUT TO CRY ...





I DUNNO.
I GUESS
YOU COULD
CALL IT
SATISFY-
ING?

I'M ONLY IN
IT FOR THE
MONEY, OF
COURSE.

BUT AT
THE SAME
TIME,

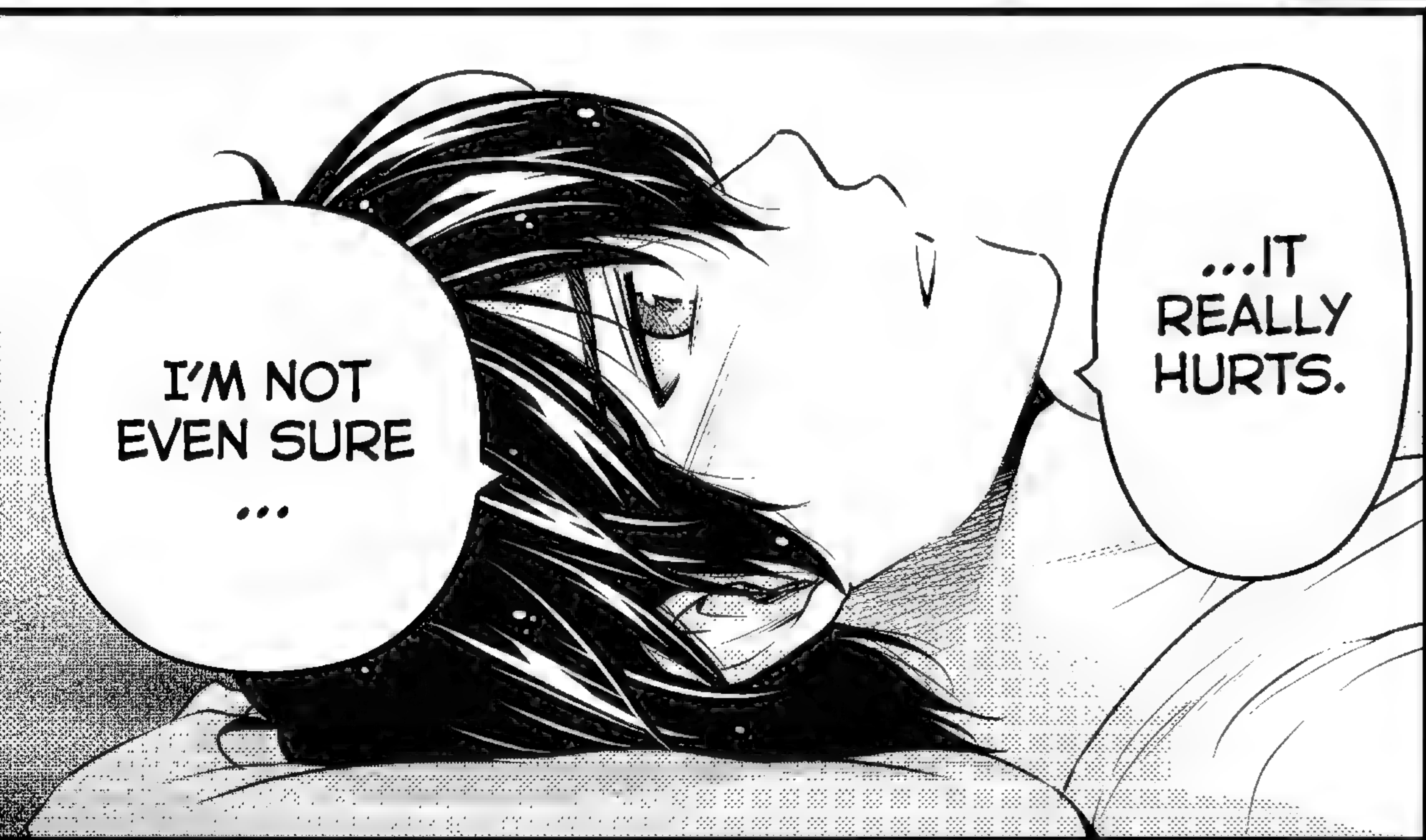
WORKING
TOWARDS
A BIGGER
PURPOSE
MADE ME
FEEL "ALIVE,"
Y'KNOW?



TO BE
HONEST,
IT WAS
REALLY
TOUGH.

I
REALIZED
HOW
HARD
MAKING
MONEY
CAN BE.

BUT
...

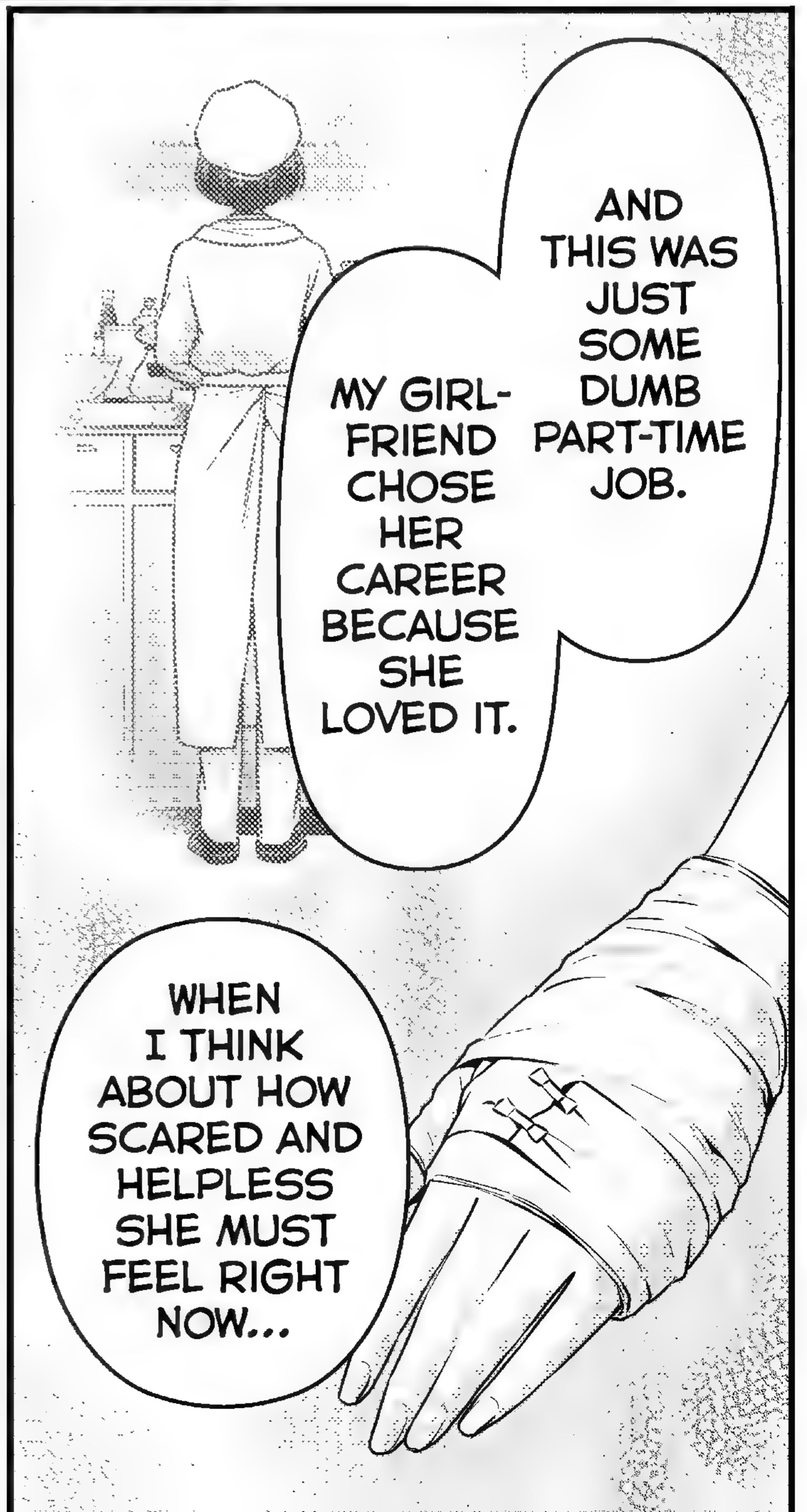


I'M NOT
EVEN SURE
...

...IT
REALLY
HURTS.



...WHAT
I CAN
DO FOR
HER.



AND
THIS WAS
JUST
SOME
DUMB
PART-TIME
JOB.

MY GIRL-
FRIEND
CHOSE
HER
CAREER
BECAUSE
SHE
LOVED IT.

WHEN
I THINK
ABOUT HOW
SCARED AND
HELPLESS
SHE MUST
FEEL RIGHT
NOW...



NO.

THAT'S
NOT
WHAT
I...



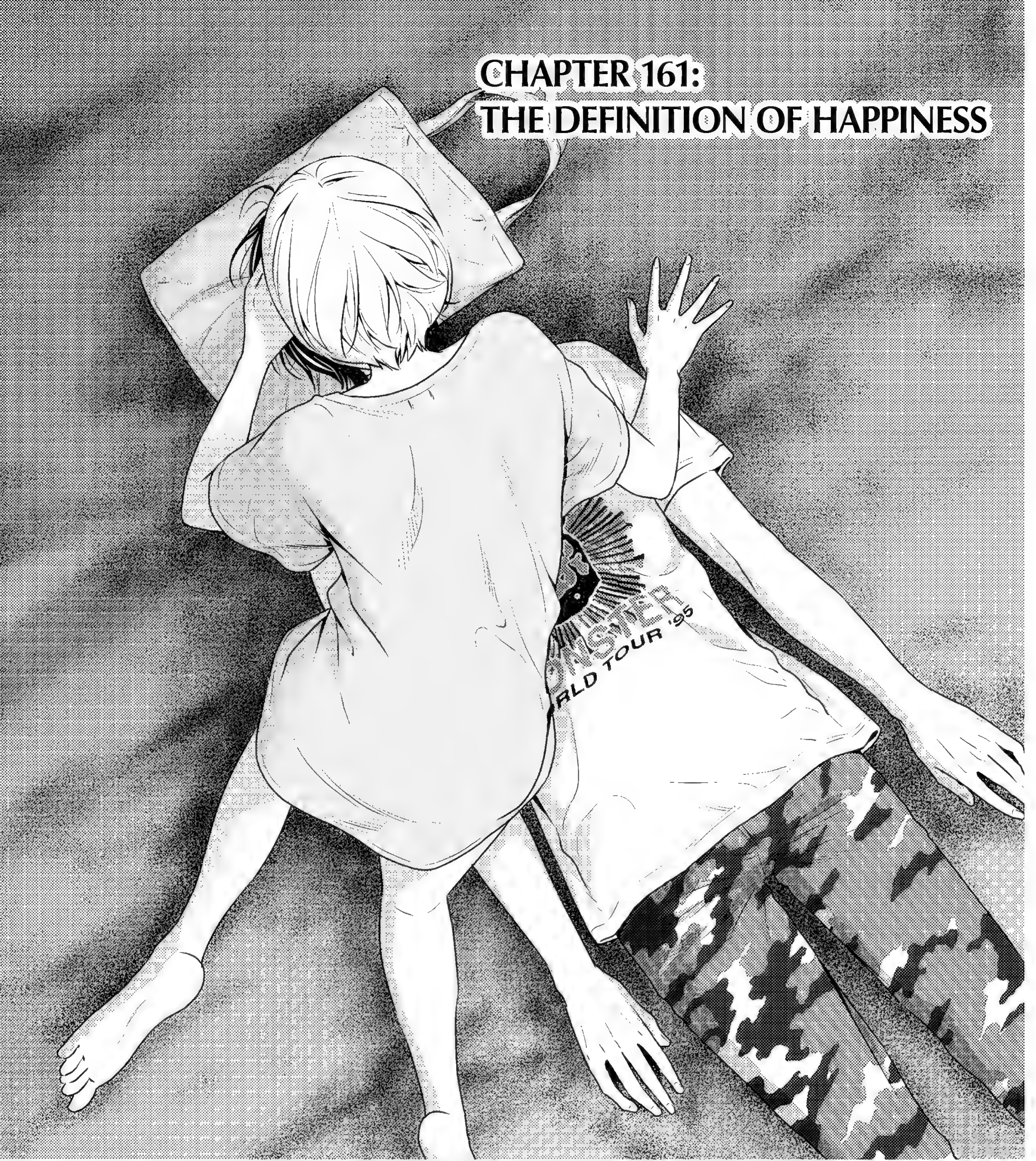
YOU'RE
REALLY
KIND,

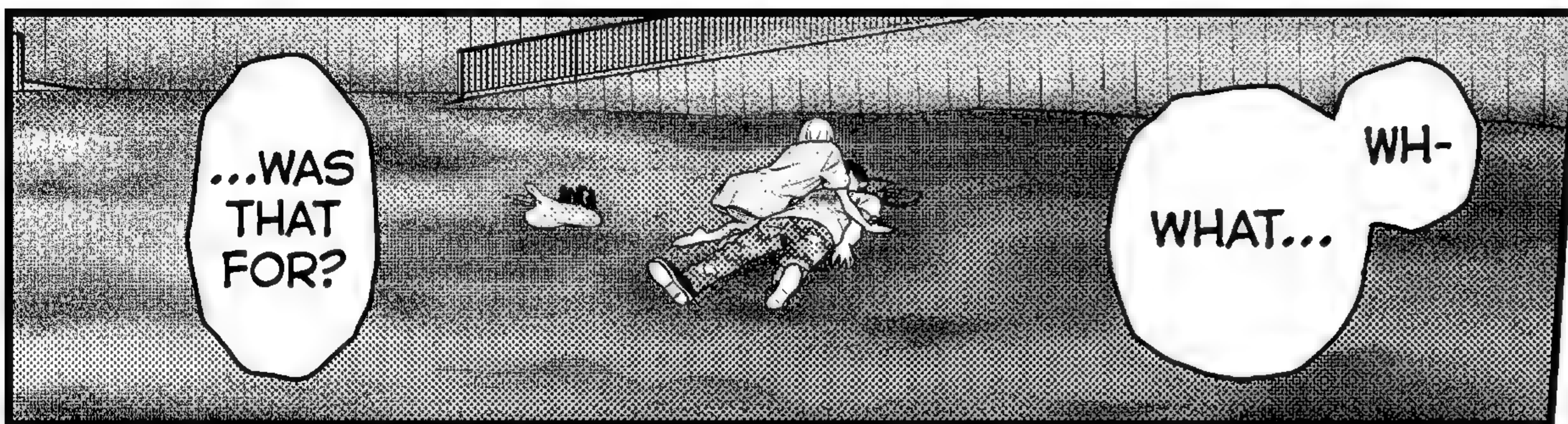
NAT-
KUN.



HUH
...?

CHAPTER 161: THE DEFINITION OF HAPPINESS







I WAS
ABANDONED
AS A
CHILD...

...AND
GREW UP
IN A
CHURCH
ORPHAN-
AGE.



NUN?

DID YOU
GO TO
CHURCH?

UHH
...

NOT
EXACTLY.



I THINK I WAS
ONLY THREE
AND MY LITTLE
BROTHER WAS
MAYBE EIGHT
MONTHS OLD
WHEN WE WERE
TAKEN IN.

I ONLY
REMEMBERED
A LITTLE OF
HOW IT USED
TO BE AFTER
ASKING
THE SOCIAL
WORKERS
WAY LATER.

WE WERE
VICTIMS
OF WHAT
YOU'D CALL
"CHILD
NEGLECT."



SOR-
RY.

I...HAD
NO IDEA.

....!

YOU
DON'T
HAVE TO
APOLO-
GIZE.



TO BE
HONEST,
I'M GLAD
I GREW
UP IN THE
ORPHAN-
AGE.

I
HARDLY
EVEN
REMEMBER
LIVING
WITH MY
PARENTS.

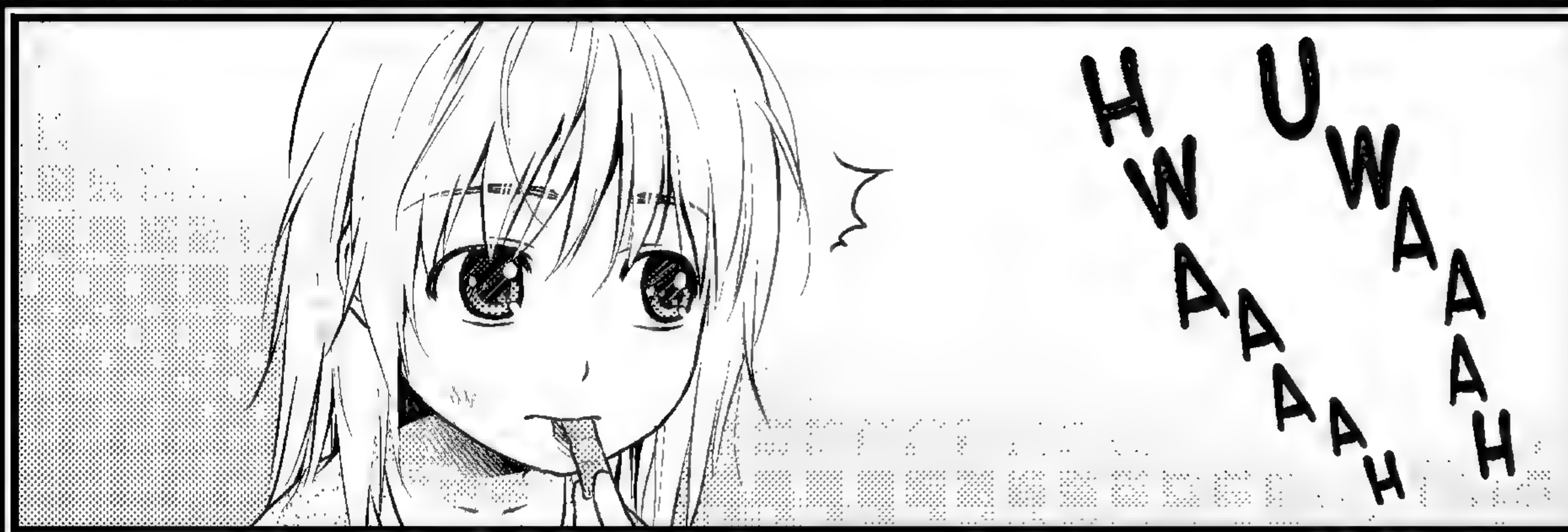
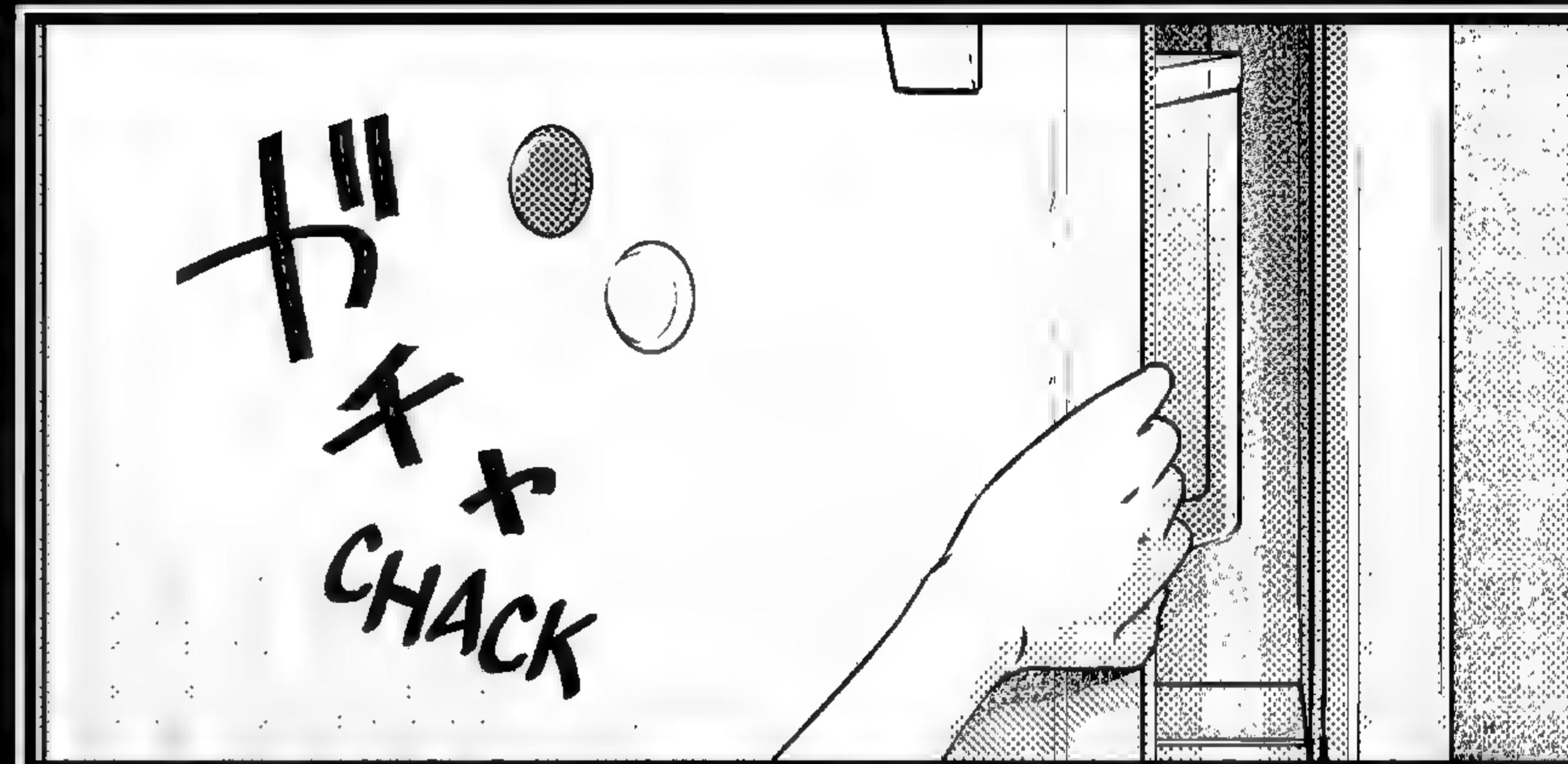


...AND
GETTING
REALLY
WORRIED
WHEN SHE
WOULDN'T
COME
HOME FOR
DAYS AT
A TIME.



...IS THAT
MY MOM
WOULD HAVE
STRANGE
MEN OVER
FROM TIME
TO TIME...

ALL I
REALLY
SEEM TO
REMEM-
BER...



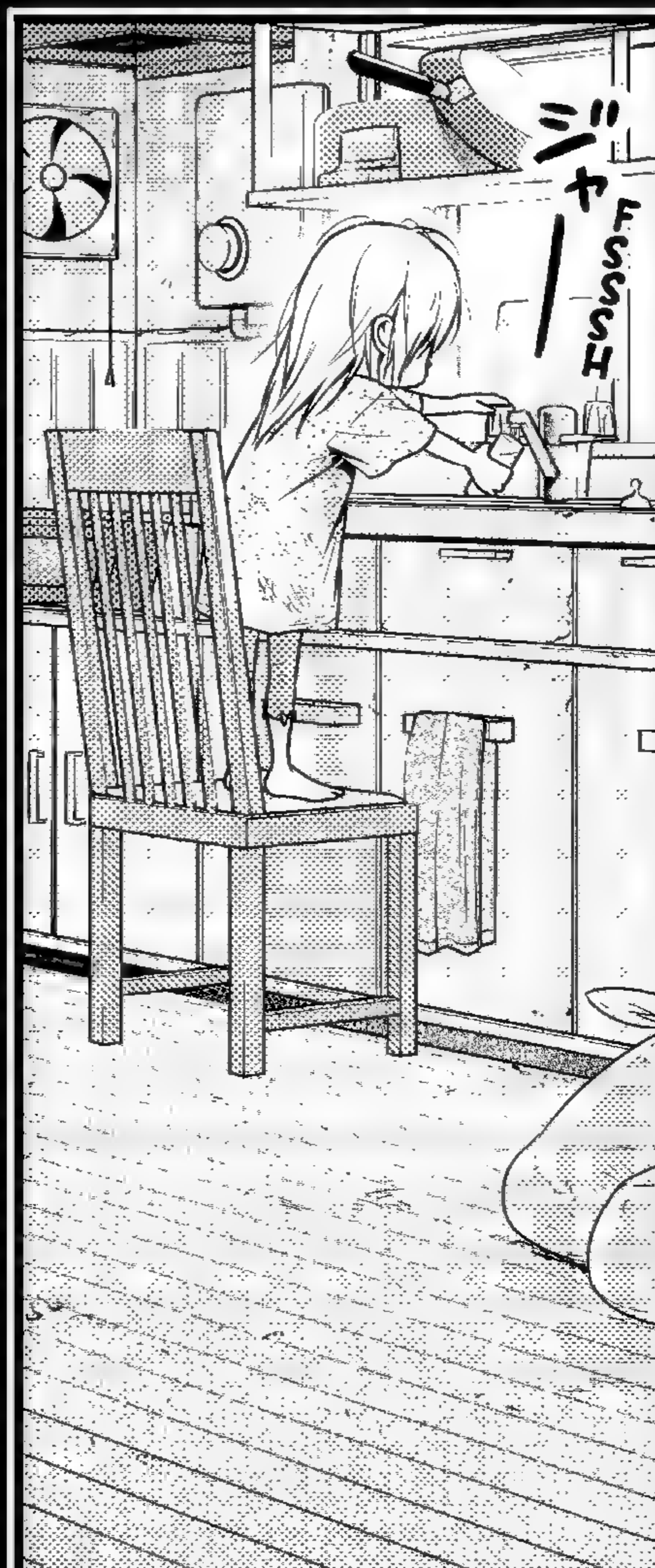
H
W
A
A
A
H
U
W
A
A
A
H



WAWA.

LEO.

HERE
SOME
WAWA.



KRNCH

KRNCH

KRNCH



AFTERWARDS,
THE CHILD
GUIDANCE
CENTER SENT
ME TO AN
ORPHANAGE,
AND MY
BROTHER TO
A NURSERY.

THE ADULTS
WERE ALL
REALLY
KIND TO US,
BUT...



A NEIGHBOR
NOTICED MY
BROTHER'S CRIES
GETTING WEAKER
AND CALLED
CHILD PROTECTIVE
SERVICES, AND
THEY TOOK
US AWAY.

APPARENTLY,
HE WAS
DANGER-
OUSLY MAL-
NOURISHED.



I'M...

...A
POOR,
PATHETIC
CHILD.



WHAT KIND
OF PARENT
ABANDONS
THEIR OWN
CHILDREN.
IT'S
PATHETIC...

THEY'RE
SKIN AND
BONES.
PEOPLE
CAN BE SO
CRUEL...



YOU
POOR
THING.
IT MUST
HAVE
BEEN SO
HARD.

DON'T
WORRY.
YOU'RE
SAFE NOW.



...TO MEET
A LUCKY
CHILD LIKE
YOU, MAO-
CHAN!

I'M
SOOOO
HAPPY...



JUST
WHEN I
STARTED
TO
BELIEVE
IT...

ARE YOU
MAO-CHAN?
IT'S NICE TO
MEET YOU!



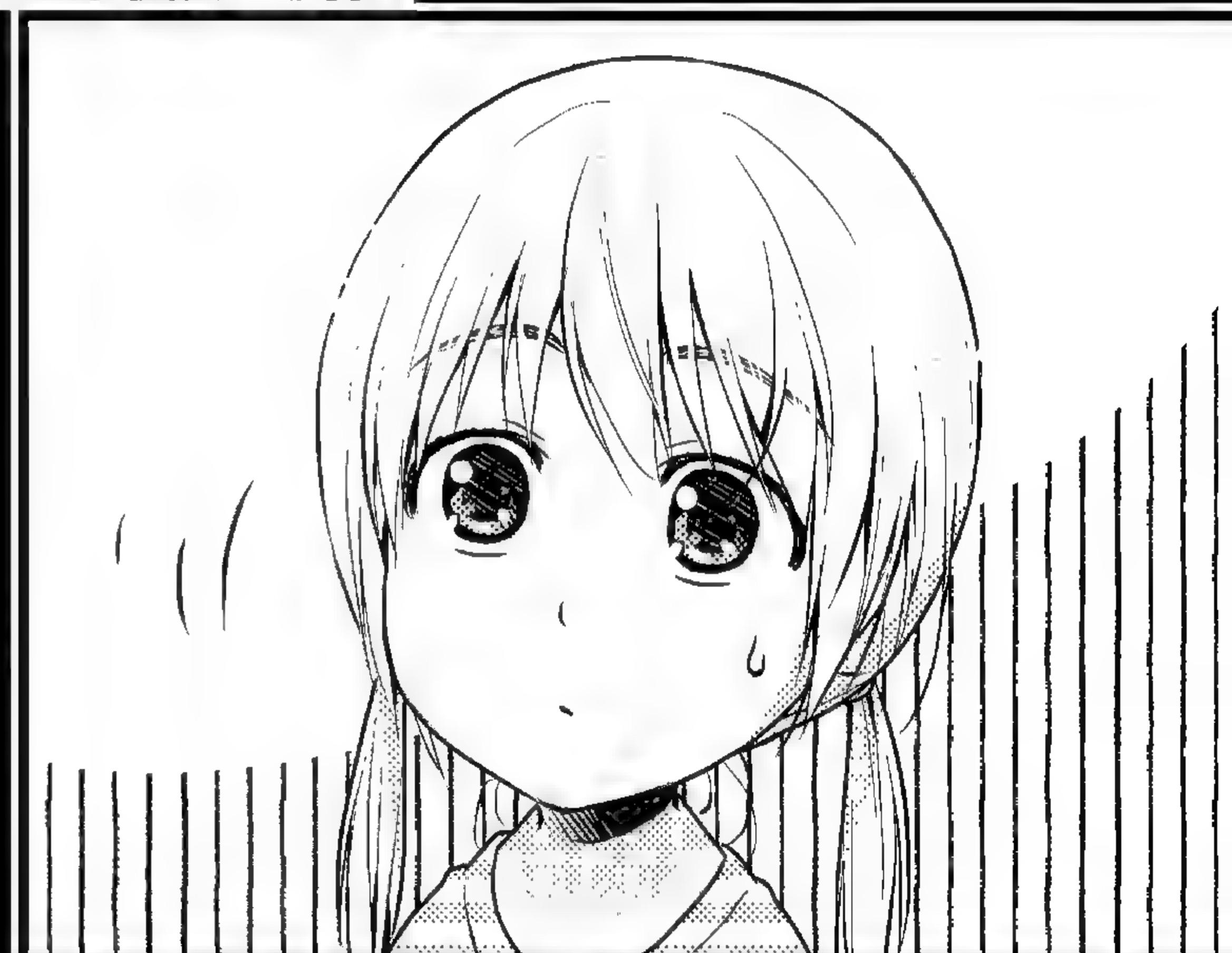
ME AND
LEO...

WHY
NOT?

UM
...

...ARE
PATHETIC
CHIL-
DREN.

BUT I'M
NOT
LUCKY.



...BECAUSE
YOU ARE THE
RESULT OF A
CHAIN OF LIFE
STRETCHING
AAALL THE WAY
BACK TO THE
BIRTH OF THE
UNIVERSE.

LISTEN,
DEAR.
YOU'RE
HERE
TODAY...

VICTORY
IS IN
YOUR
DNA!

I DON'T
GET IT...



AFTER
ALL,
YOU'RE
ALIVE,
AREN'T
YOU?!



AH HA

AH, HA, HA!
THAT'S
NOT
TRUE!

HA
HA

WHO TOLD
YOU THAT?
THEY
TRICKED
YOU!



...JUST FOR
BEING YOU,
MAO-CHAN!

YOU'RE
SUPER
DUPER
LUCKY...



...MY
BROTHER
AND I
NEVER HAD
A CHANCE
TO FEEL
SORRY FOR
OURSELVES.

THANKS
TO HER
...

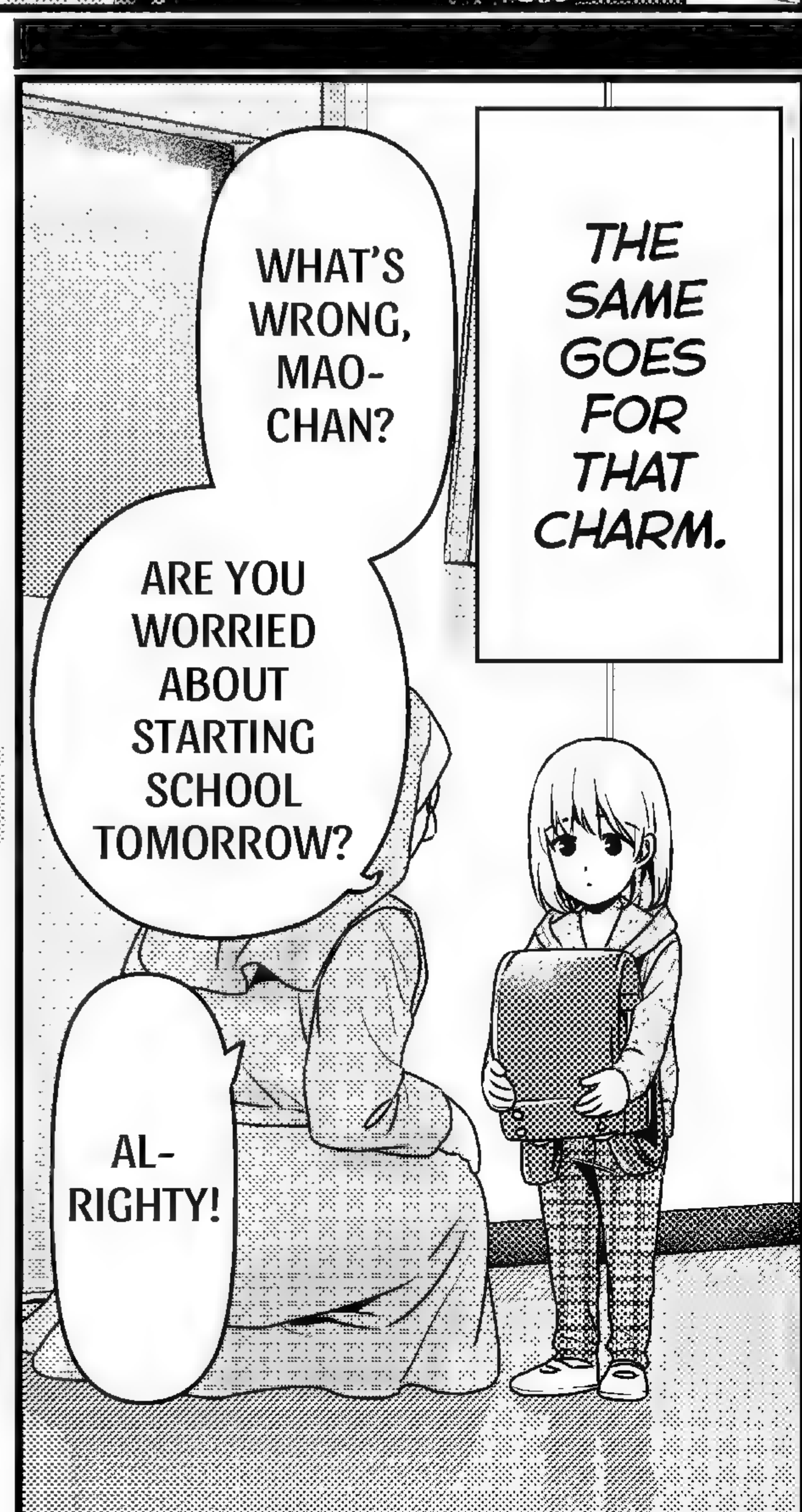


THE
NUN WAS
A REALLY
CHEERFUL
LADY.



AT TIMES
LIKE
THESE...

...WHAT
YOU NEED
IS THE
"EVERY-
THING'S
OKAY"
CHARM!



WHAT'S
WRONG,
MAO-
CHAN?

ARE YOU
WORRIED
ABOUT
STARTING
SCHOOL
TOMORROW?

AL-
RIGHTY!

THE
SAME
GOES
FOR
THAT
CHARM.



...BUT IT
REALLY
DID MAKE
ME FEEL
INVINCIBLE.



THAT'LL
CHASE
AWAY
ALL YOUR
FEARS.

THINKING
BACK, SHE
MIGHT HAVE
JUST BEEN
TRYING TO
CONVINCE
ME...



I FELT LIKE
EVERYTHING
WOULD BE
OKAY AS LONG
AS I HAD MY
CHARM.

IT GAVE ME
A LOT OF
COURAGE.

SHE DID
IT FOR ME
AGAIN WHEN
I LEFT THE
ORPHANAGE
AFTER I
GRADUATED
FROM HIGH
SCHOOL.



YOU
KNOW,

MY
BROTHER
AND I
MIGHT
NOT HAVE
HAD WHAT
OTHER
PEOPLE
HAD...

...BUT
WE
WEREN'T
"UNHAP-
PY."

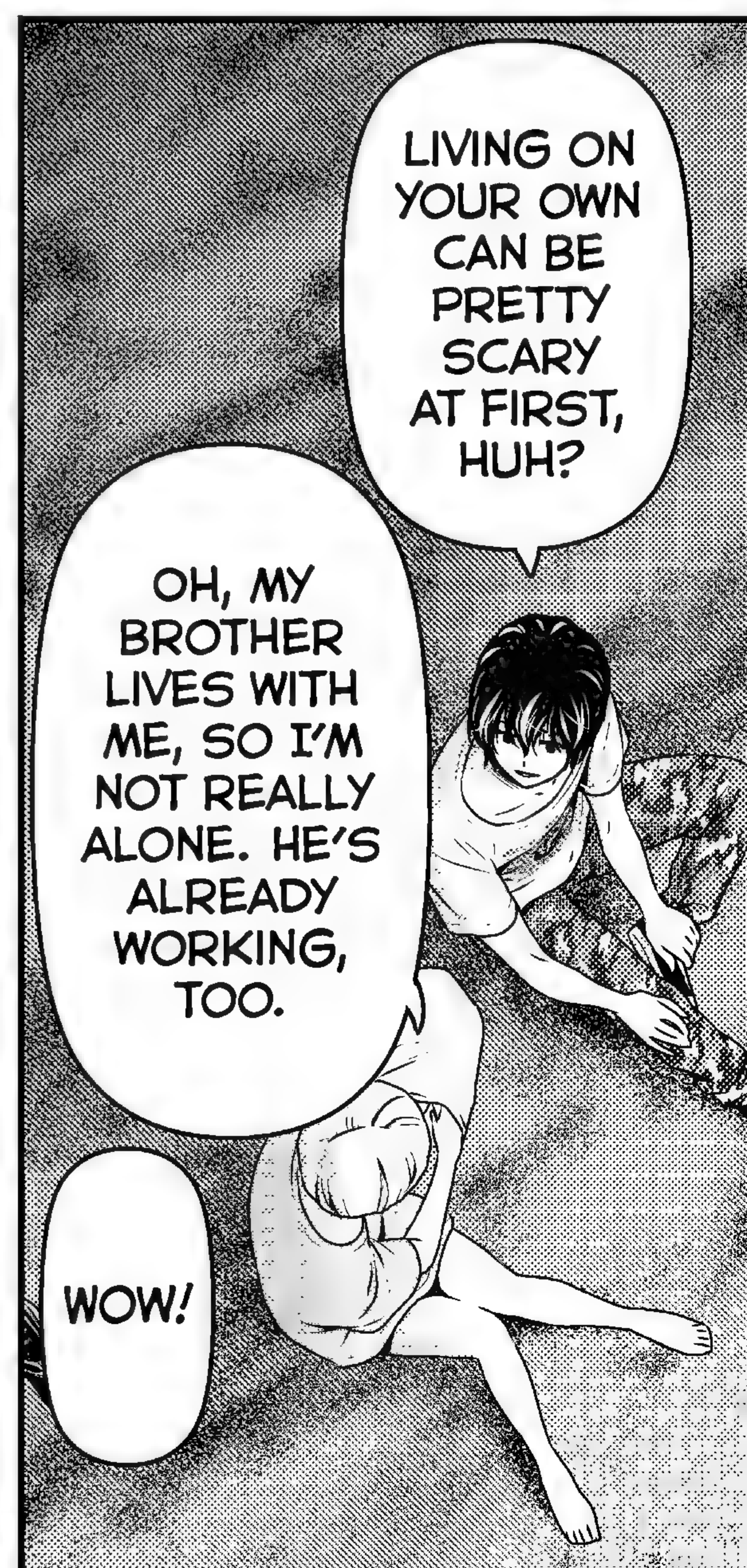


THIS
IS MY
BROTHER,
LEO.

HE
WORKS
AS A
MODEL
WHILE
GOING
TO HIGH
SCHOOL.

OH! I'VE
SEEN HIM IN
MAGAZINES
BEFORE!

HE'S HAND-
SOME,
HUH?



LIVING ON
YOUR OWN
CAN BE
PRETTY
SCARY
AT FIRST,
HUH?

OH, MY
BROTHER
LIVES WITH
ME, SO I'M
NOT REALLY
ALONE. HE'S
ALREADY
WORKING,
TOO.

WOW!




...I DON'T
WANT YOU
TO FEEL
LIKE YOUR
GIRLFRIEND
IS PATHETIC,
EITHER,
NAT-KUN.

SO,
I WAS
JUST
THINKING
...



I MIGHT'VE
BEEN ON
THE VERGE
OF THAT
BEFORE.

YOU'RE
RIGHT
...



THAT
CHARM
WORKS
WONDERS,
SO YOU
SHOULD
BE FINE.

NO ONE
KNOWS
WHAT THE
FUTURE
WILL
BRING...



...BUT IF YOU
PITY HER
TOO MUCH
AND LET HER
GLOOMINESS
AFFECT YOU,
THEN YOU'LL
BOTH GO
DOWN
TOGETHER.

I KNOW SHE
MUST FEEL
PRETTY
EMPTY...

...NOT
BEING ABLE
TO USE HER
HANDS THE
WAY SHE
WANTS TO...



NO,
I'M STILL
AWAKE.

WHAT'S
UP?

OH, NOT
MUCH.

HEY.
RUI?

SORRY.
WERE YOU
ASLEEP?



HELLO
?



CAN YOU
SEE THE
MOON
FROM
THERE?

HMM.



I JUST
...

...WANTED
TO HEAR
YOUR
VOICE.



RIGHT
?

IT'S A
PERFECT
HALF.

WHAT A
PRETTY
HALF
MOON.



I JUST
THOUGHT
THAT IF WE
PUT BOTH OF
OUR PIECES
TOGETHER
...

...MAYBE
IT'D MAKE A
BEAUTIFUL
FULL MOON.



YEAH.



NEVER
MIND.
MY BAD
...

OH.

ER...

SORRY, I'M
NOT SURE I
FOLLOW.



...AND YOU'RE
WORRIED
BECAUSE YOU
DON'T KNOW
WHEN YOU'LL
BE ABLE TO
GO BACK TO
WORK...

...I KNOW
YOUR INJURY
HURTS RIGHT
NOW...

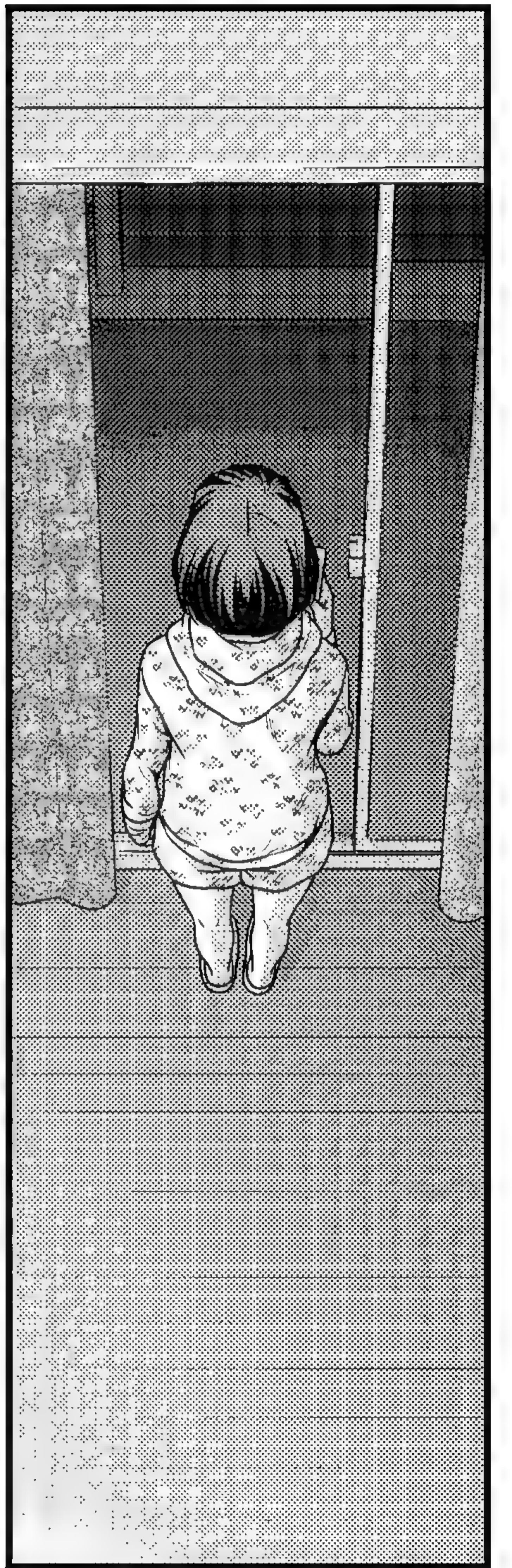
IT'S
JUST
...

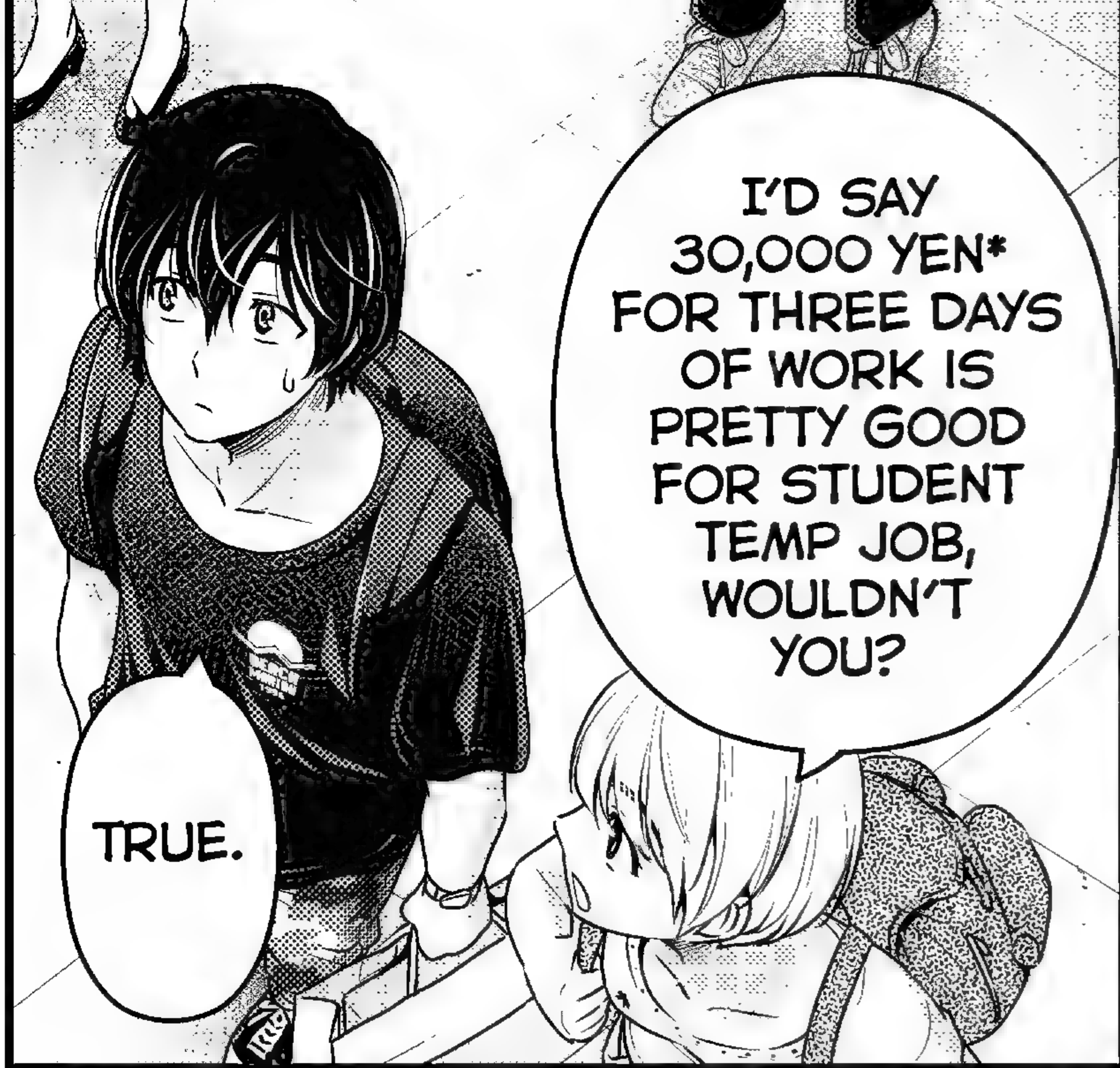


I'M
SURE
ALL OF
THIS...

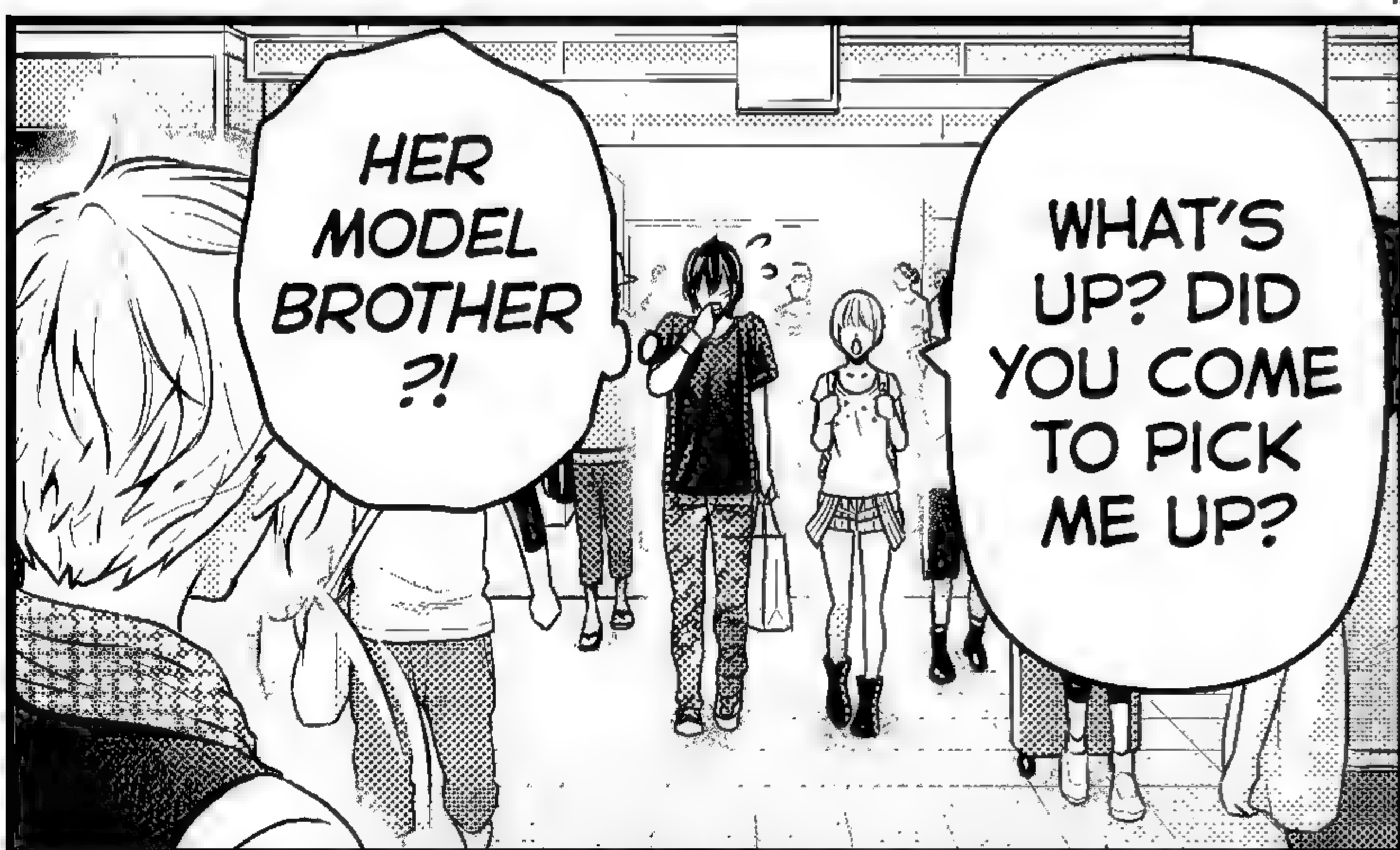
...WILL
HELP YOU
GROW AS
A PERSON,
RUI.

...BUT
EVERY-
THING
WILL BE
FINE.

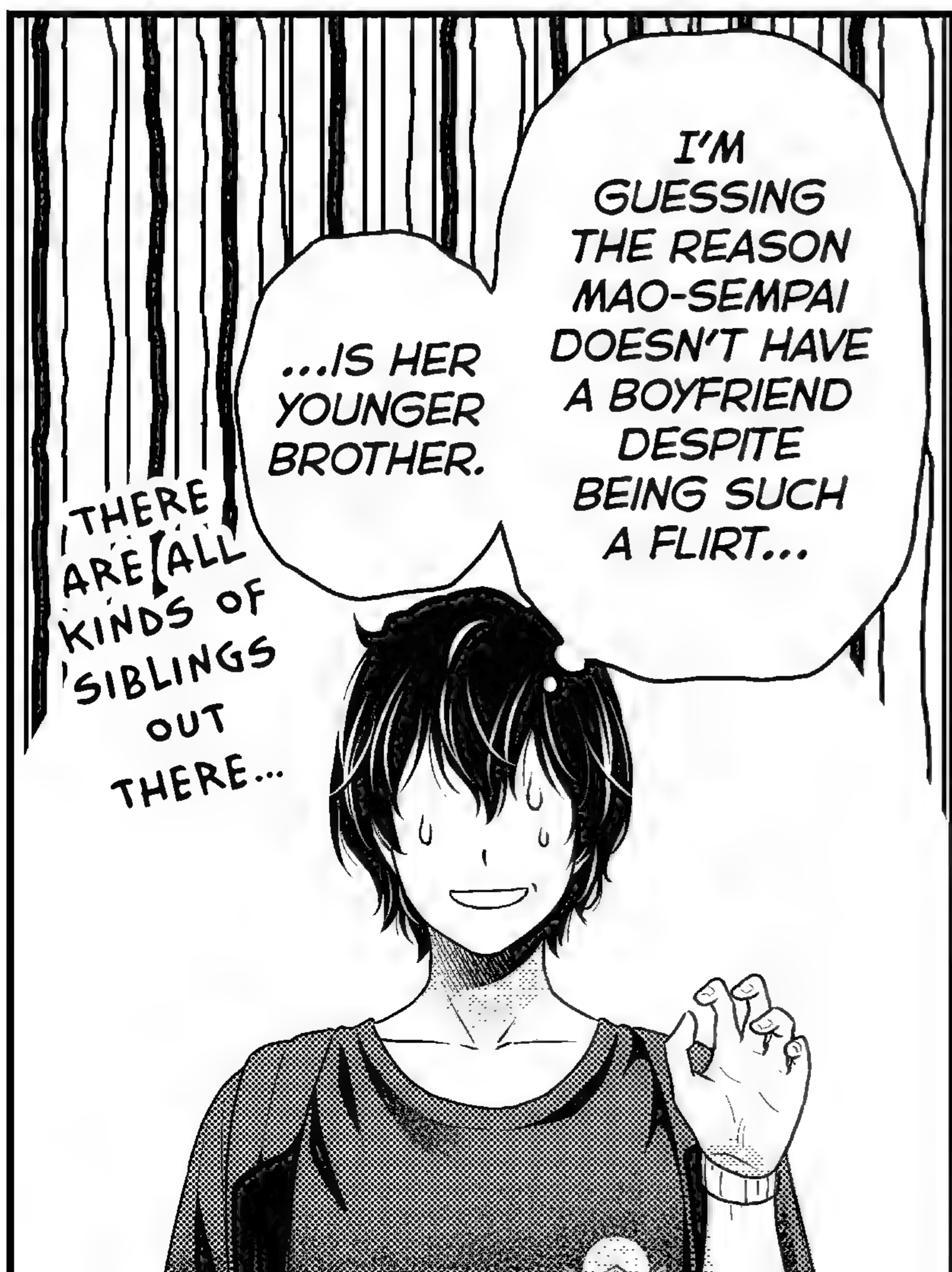


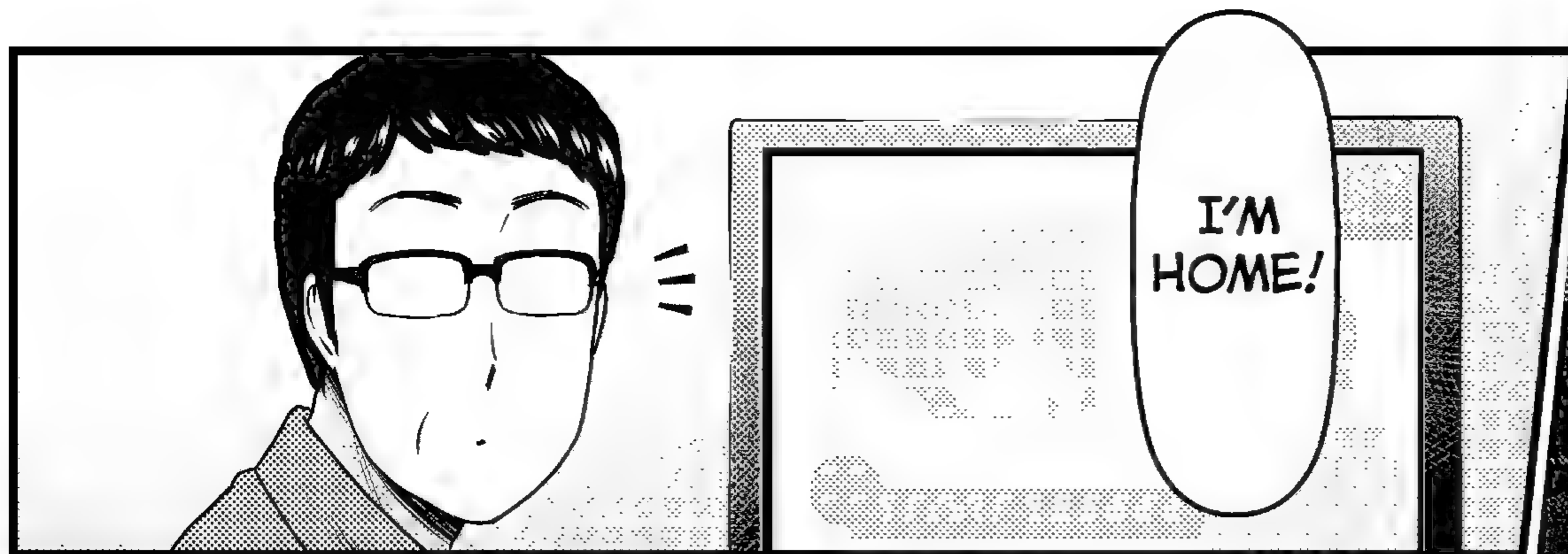


*APPROX. \$300 USD.

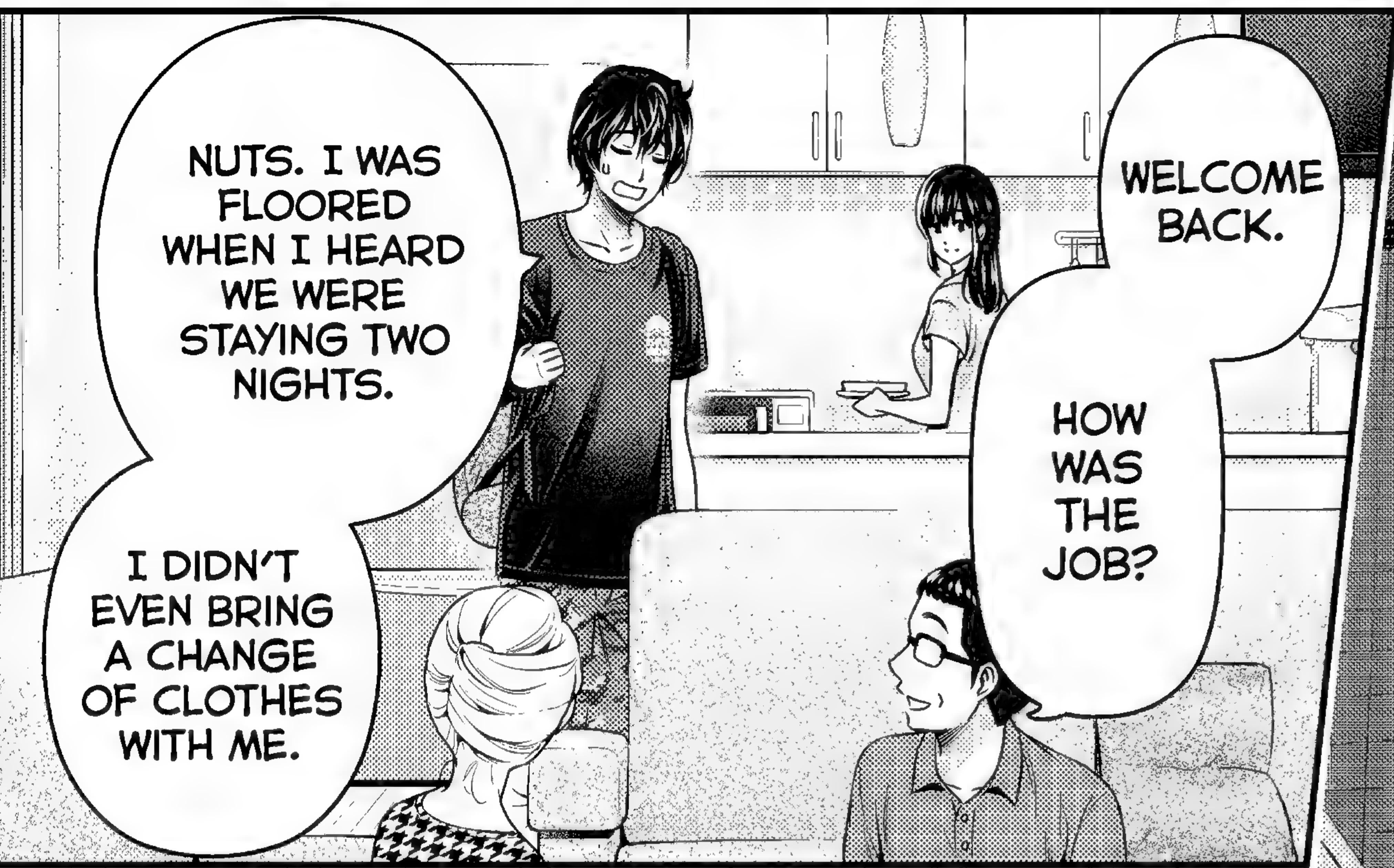








I'M HOME!



NUTS. I WAS FLOORED WHEN I HEARD WE WERE STAYING TWO NIGHTS.

I DIDN'T EVEN BRING A CHANGE OF CLOTHES WITH ME.

WELCOME BACK.

HOW WAS THE JOB?



CHACK
カ
チ
カ



I BET IT GAVE YOU A NEW APPRECIATION FOR MONEY, HUH?

NO JOKE. I'LL NEVER TAKE MONEY FOR GRANTED AGAIN.



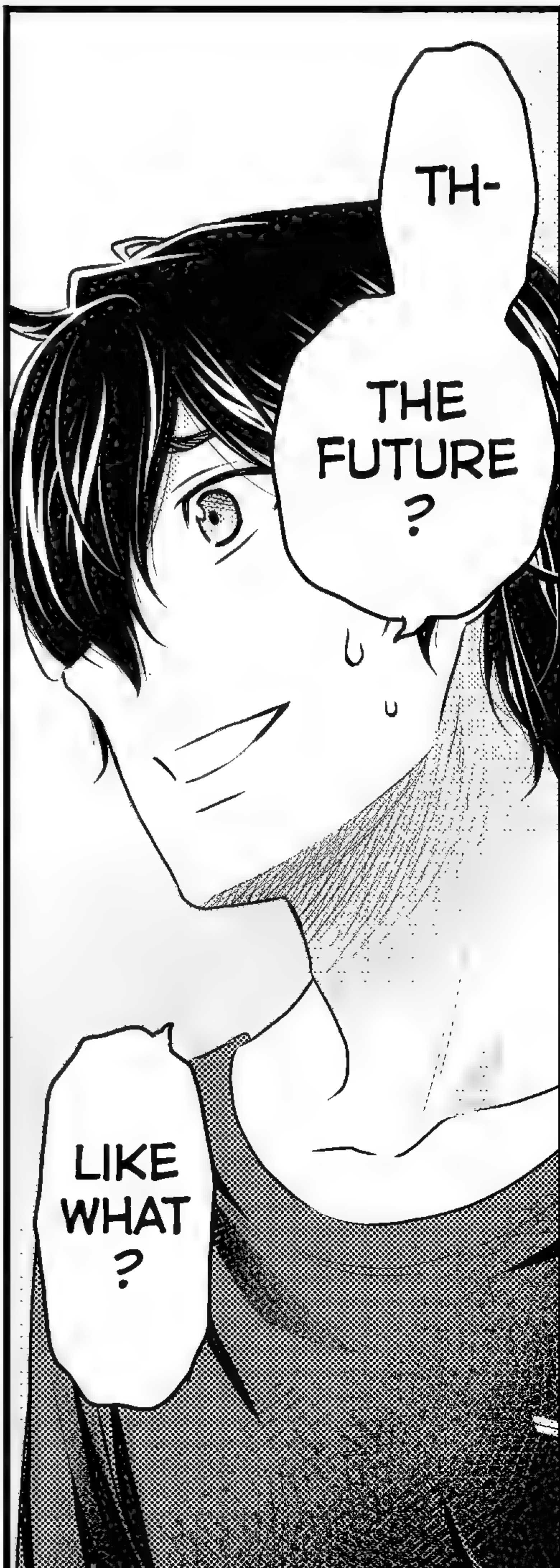
GINGKO MANOR'S A HUGE, FAMOUS INN IN ATAMI, RIGHT?

APPAR-
ENTLY.

THERE WERE SO MANY ROOMS AND SO MUCH TO DO. I WAS DEAD BY THE END.



CHAPTER 162: LOOKING BEYOND



SEE OUR
RELATIONSHIP
GOING?

WHERE
EXACTLY
DO YOU



IS IT
...?

DON'T
TELL
ME...

RUI
LOOKS
PRETTY
SERIOUS
...

MY
HEART'S
POUNDING
LIKE
CRAZY.

WHAT
ABOUT
TO GO
DOWN?

HUH?
WHAT'S
WITH THIS
TENSE
ATMO-
SPHERE?

THE
PROBLEM
IS THE
LATTER.

THAT'S
USUALLY
WHERE THESE
CONVERSATIONS
GO WHEN
SOMEONE SAYS
"WE NEED
TO TALK."

IF IT'S THE
FORMER,
THEN
WHATEVER.
I'LL JUST
HAVE TO
START
PLANNING
FOR THE
FUTURE.

LET'S
GO BACK
TO BEING
BROTHER
AND
SISTER,
OKAY?

I JUST
DON'T SEE
US TOGETH-
ER YEARS
FROM NOW.

IT LOOKS
LIKE I'M
EATING
FOR TWO
NOW...

UM
...

BREAK
UP
OR

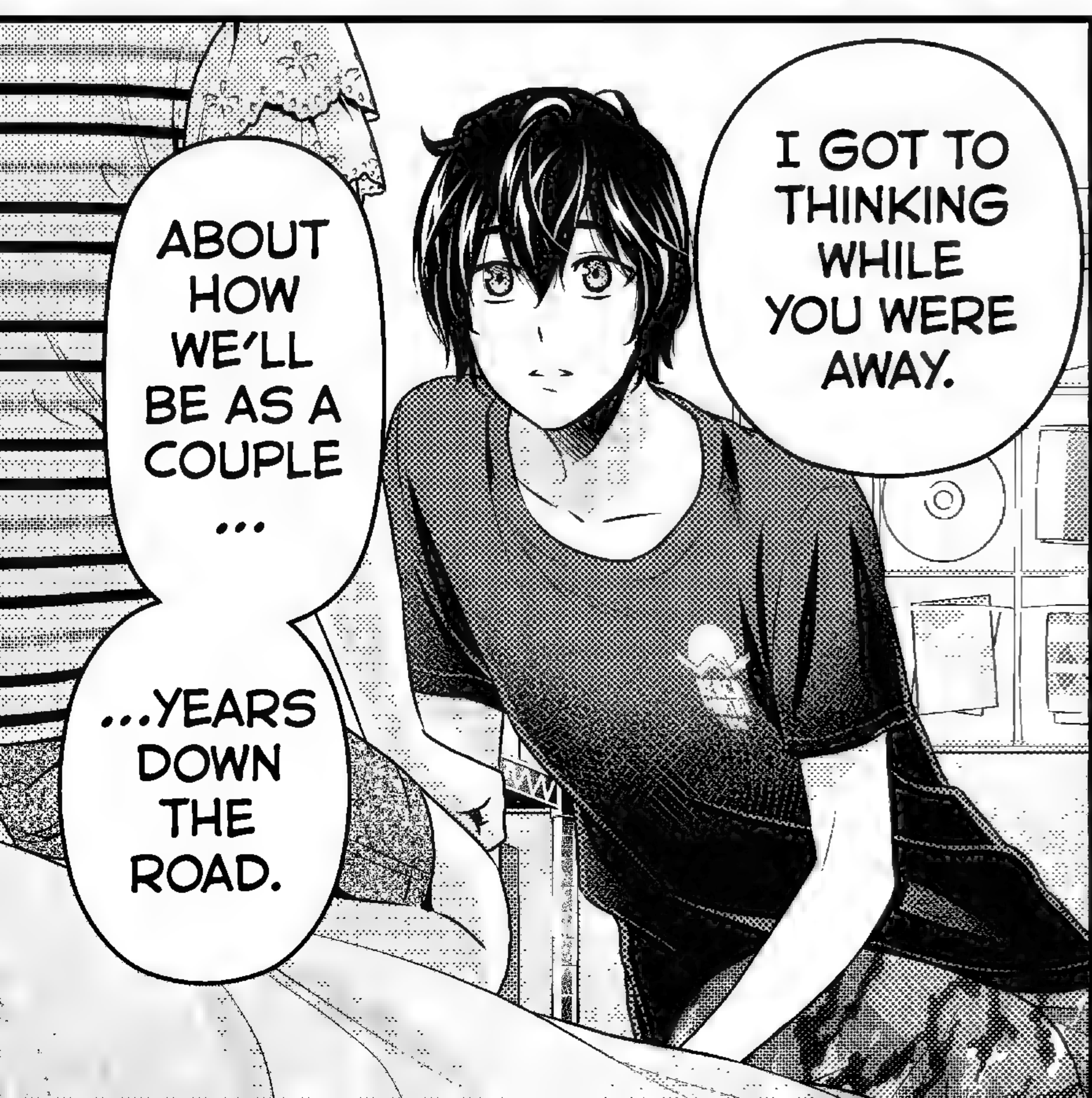
PREG-
NANT

WELL
...

IN THAT
CASE,

THERE'S
ONLY ONE
THING I
CAN DO!







BUT WHAT I
MEAN BY THAT
IS I WANT US
TO BE ABLE
TO WALK SIDE
BY SIDE.

LIKE I
JUST
SAID,

I WANT TO
BE WITH YOU
FOR THE
REST OF MY
LIFE, TOO.

I DON'T WANT
YOU TO HAVE
TO SUPPORT
ME OR HOLD
MY HAND
FOREVER.



WHOA,
WHOA,
WHOA.

...I'M
REALLY
TEMPTED TO
LEAN ON YOU
RIGHT NOW,
BUT...

TO BE
HONEST,
WITH
EVERY-
THING
THAT'S
HAP-
PENED
...

HOLD
UP.



BUT WHAT
DO YOU
WANNA DO,
EXACTLY?

PUT
SOME
DISTANCE
BETWEEN
US?

I GET HOW
YOU FEEL,
AND I
THINK IT'S
ADMIRABLE.



THAT'S
WHY...

...I THINK
I NEED TO
BECOME A
LITTLE MORE
EMOTIONALLY
INDEPEN-
DENT!



BUT,
MAKING
EXCUSES
ISN'T
GOING
TO GET
US ANY-
WHERE.



SAYING IT
BUMMED
ME OUT,
TOO...

I FEEL
KINDA
SAD WHEN
YOU PUT IT
THAT WAY
...

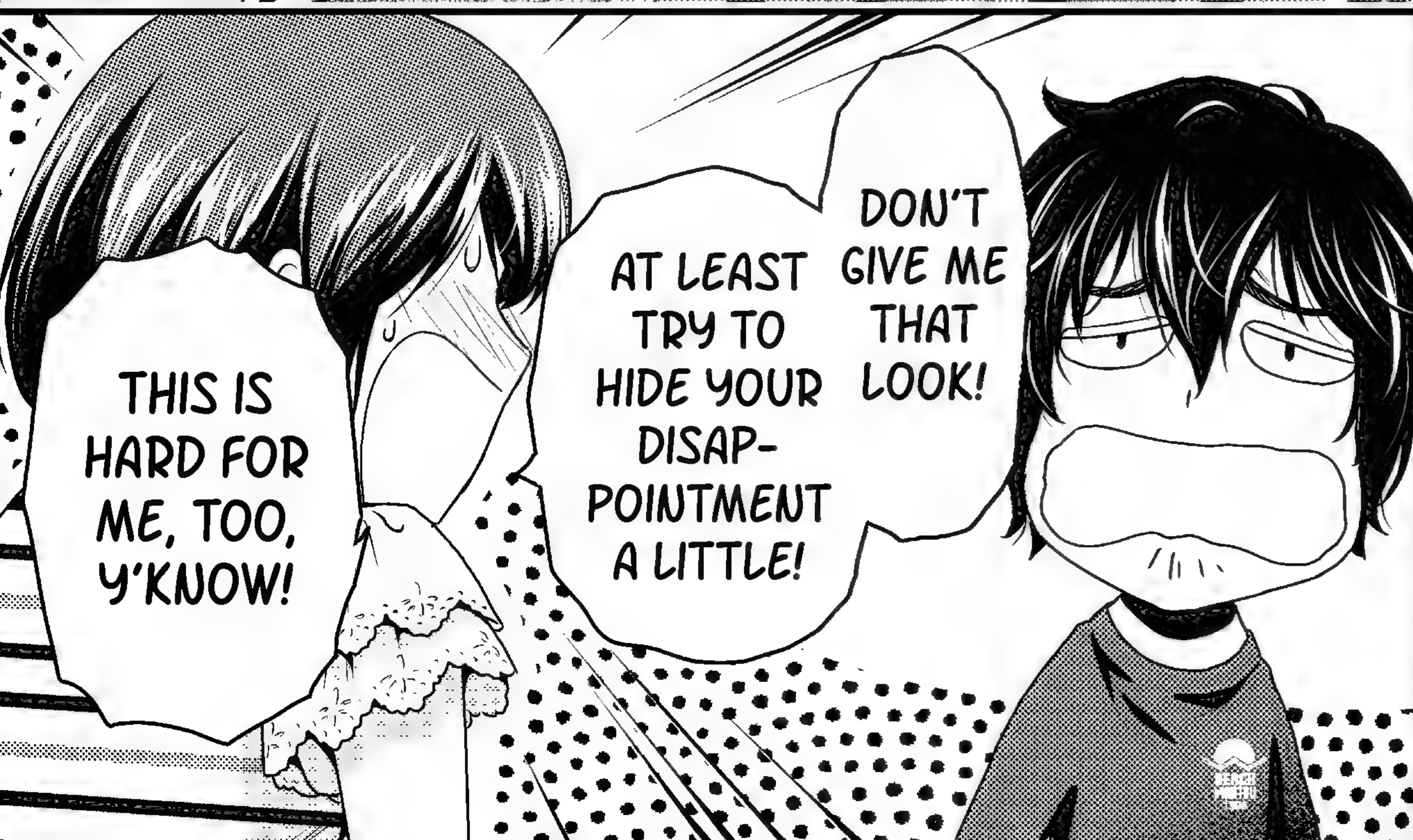


mmm...



...ONCE A
MONTH!

FROM
NOW ON,
LET'S ONLY
MEET AS A
"COUPLE..."



THIS IS
HARD FOR
ME, TOO,
Y'KNOW!

DON'T
GIVE ME
THAT
LOOK!
AT LEAST
TRY TO
HIDE YOUR
DISAP-
POINTMENT
A LITTLE!





**FOCUSING
ON OUR-
SELVES
RIGHT
NOW...**

**...WILL BE
THE BEST
THING
FOR OUR
FUTURE!**

**I'M GONNA
DO MY BEST
TO RECOVER
AND GET
BACK TO
WORK AS
SOON AS
POSSIBLE.**

**IN THE
MEANTIME,
YOU WORK
ON WRITING
A GOOD
BOOK SO
YOU CAN
CALL YOUR-
SELF AN
AUTHOR!**



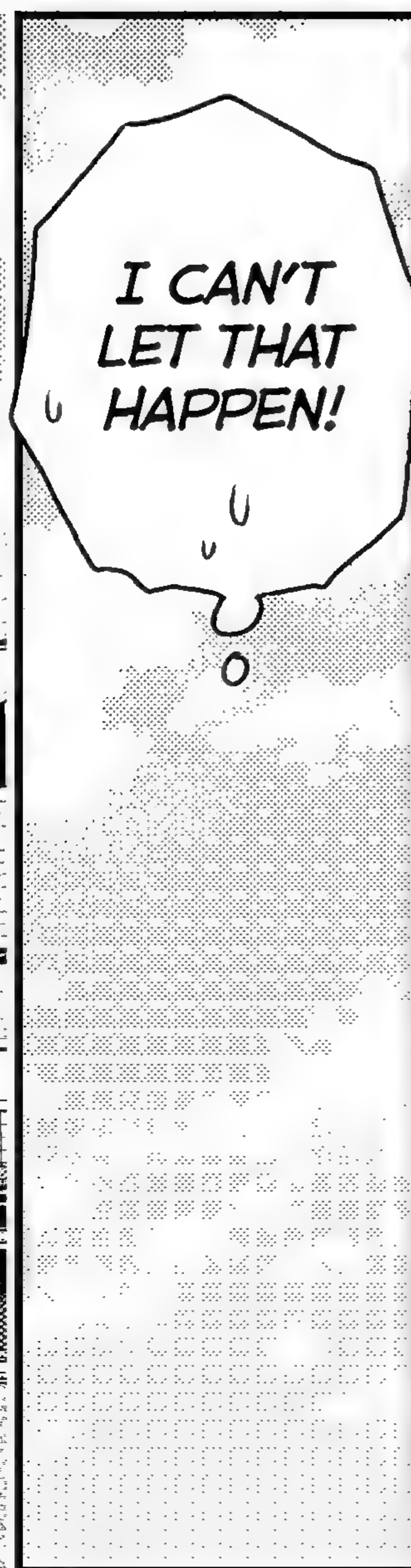
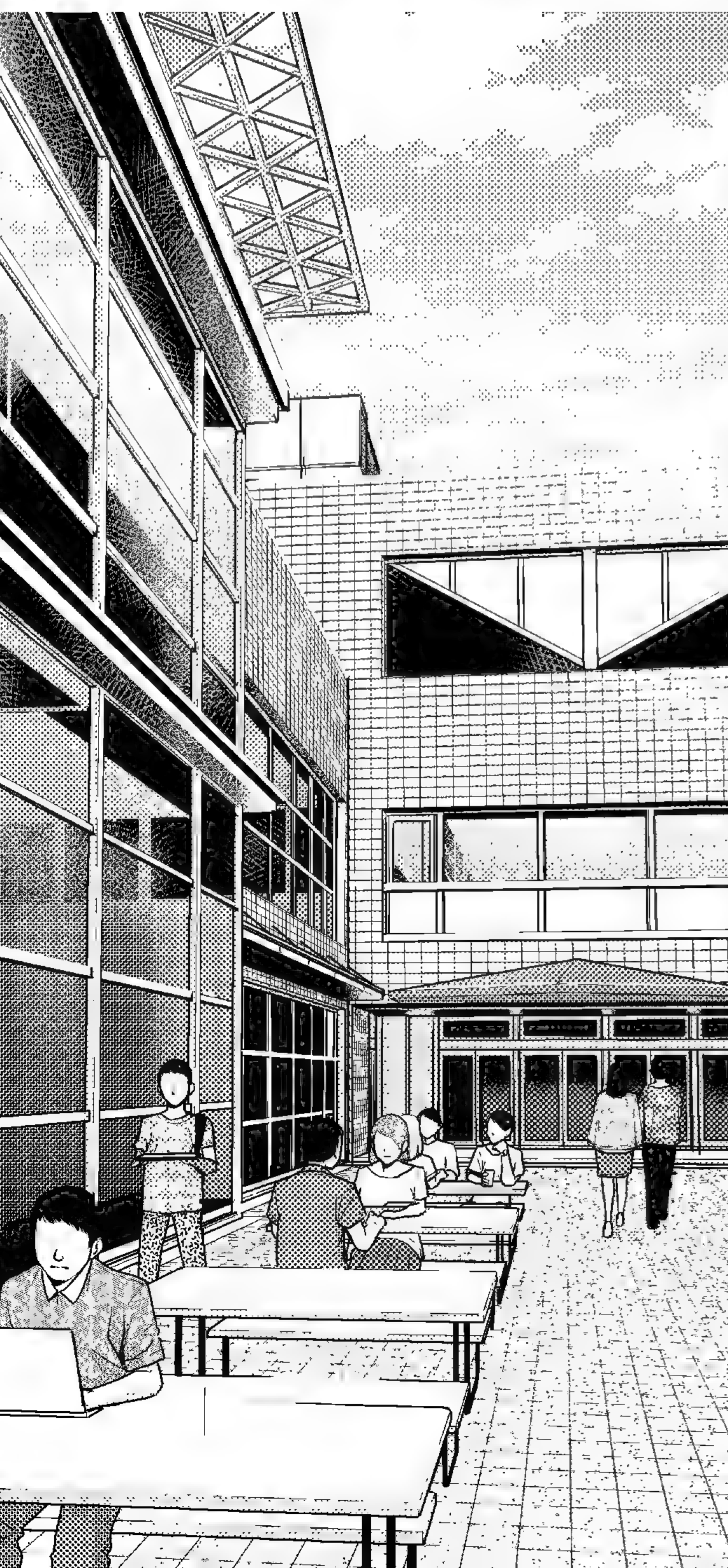
**ALL
RIGHT.**

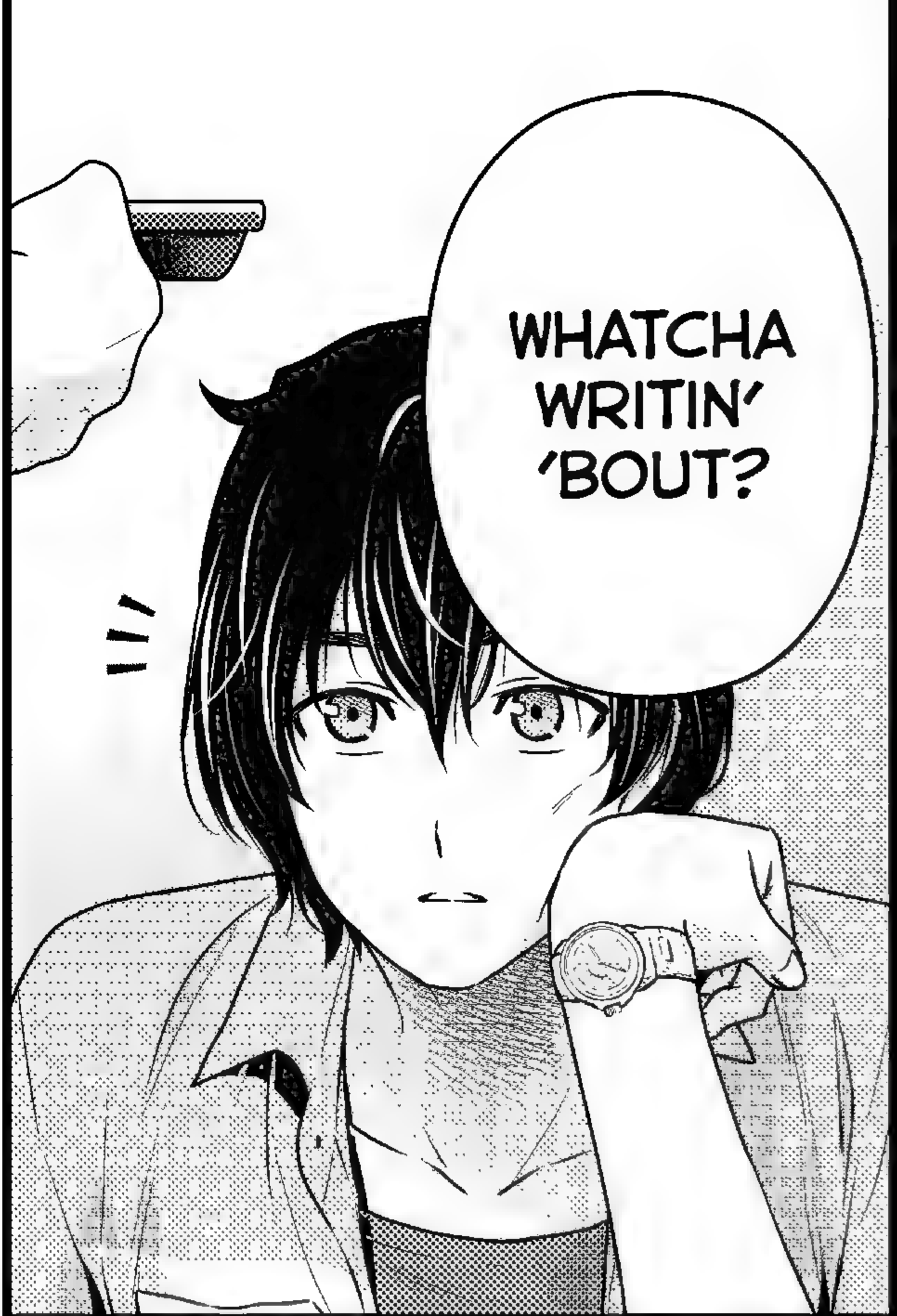
**LET'S
GIVE IT A
SHOT.**



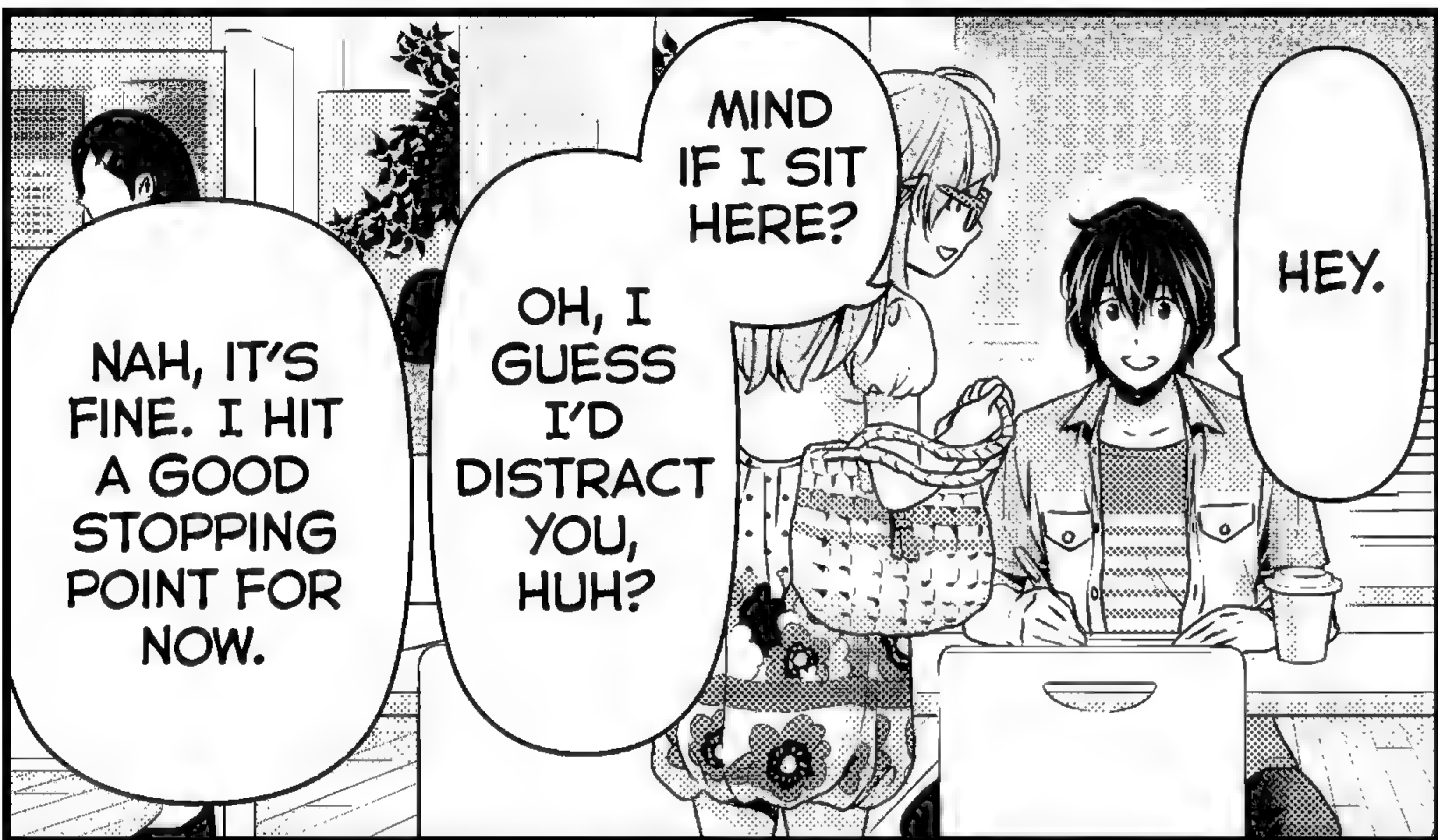
**A-
ALL
DAY?!**

**ON OUR
MONTHLY
DATE, WE CAN
JUST FOOL
AROUND AND
MAKE OUT
ALL DAY,
OKAY?!**





WHATCHA
WRITIN'
'BOUT?



MIND
IF I SIT
HERE?

HEY.

NAH, IT'S
FINE. I HIT
A GOOD
STOPPING
POINT FOR
NOW.

OH, I
GUESS
I'D
DISTRACT
YOU,
HUH?



OH, YEAH.
WHAT'S THE
PLAN FOR
FORESTER'S
NEXT SCRIPT,
HANA-
SEMPAI?

MM!

I'M WRIT-
ING
IT!



HUH...
NOT MANY
PEOPLE
WRITE
BY HAND
THESE
DAYS.

YEAH.

NEW
BOOK
?

I CAN'T
SEEM TO
COLLECT MY
THOUGHTS
UNLESS
I DO.

AHH.
ONE OF
THOSE
TYPES,
HUH?



YO!

HANA-
SEMPAI!



THE PEOPLE
IN HR SEEMED
TO LIKE ME,
SO I HOPE
EVERYTHING
GOES WELL.



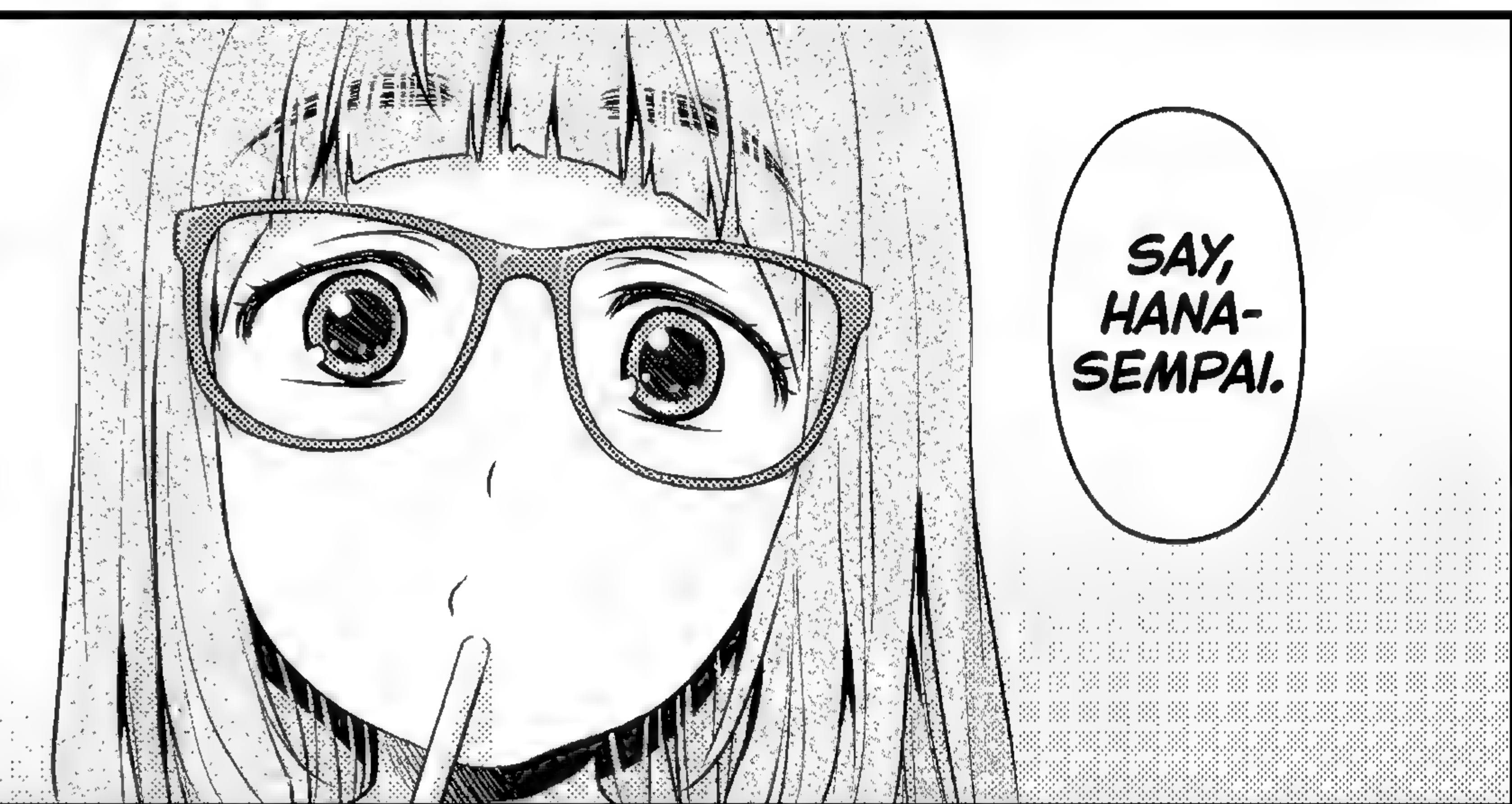
THANKS!

OOH!
THAT'S
GREAT!

MY
INTERNSHIP
FINALLY
ENDED WITH
NO PROBLEMS!



HAVE YOU
EVER
THOUGHT
ABOUT BE-
COMING AN
AUTHOR?



SAY,
HANA-
SEMPAI.



IT'S
PROBABLY
JUST THAT
SHE THINKS
IT'S NOT
STABLE
ENOUGH...

...BUT
MY MOM
DOESN'T
THINK MUCH
OF CAREERS
LIKE THAT.

IT'S NOT
THAT I
DON'T LIKE
THE IDEA,

BUT IT'S
JUST MY
MOM AND
ME AT
HOME.

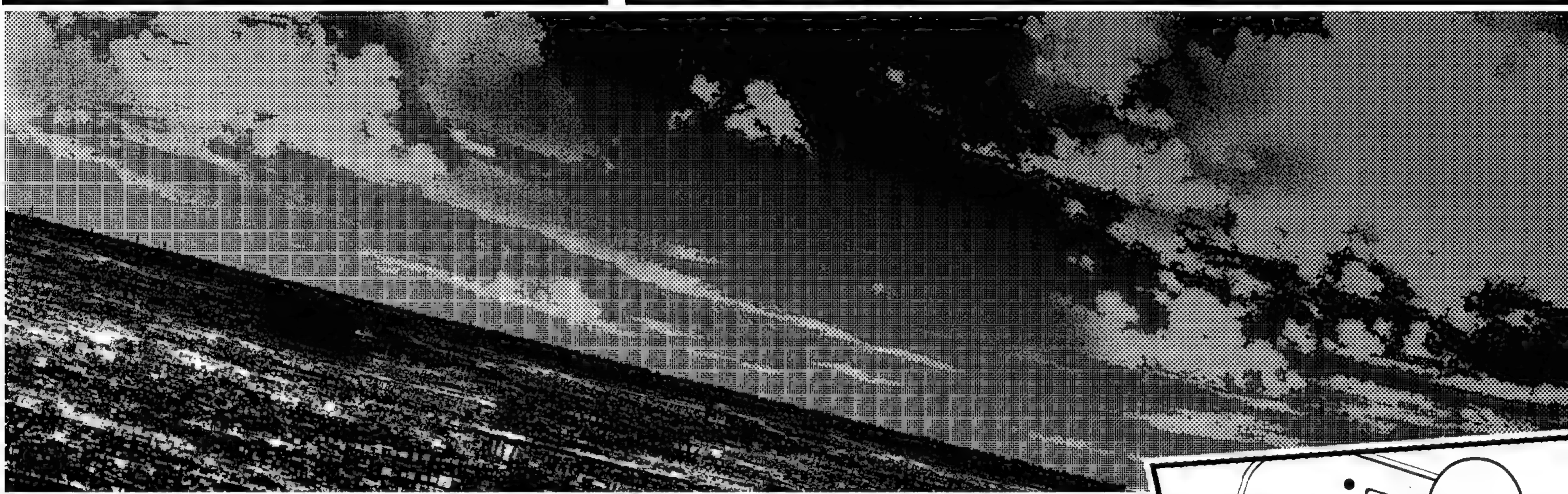


WELL,
I DO
LIKE TO
WRITE
IN MY
SPARE
TIME.

OH
...

THEN
WHY
NOT?

YOU
COULD
TOTALLY
GO PRO
WITH
YOUR
SKILLS.

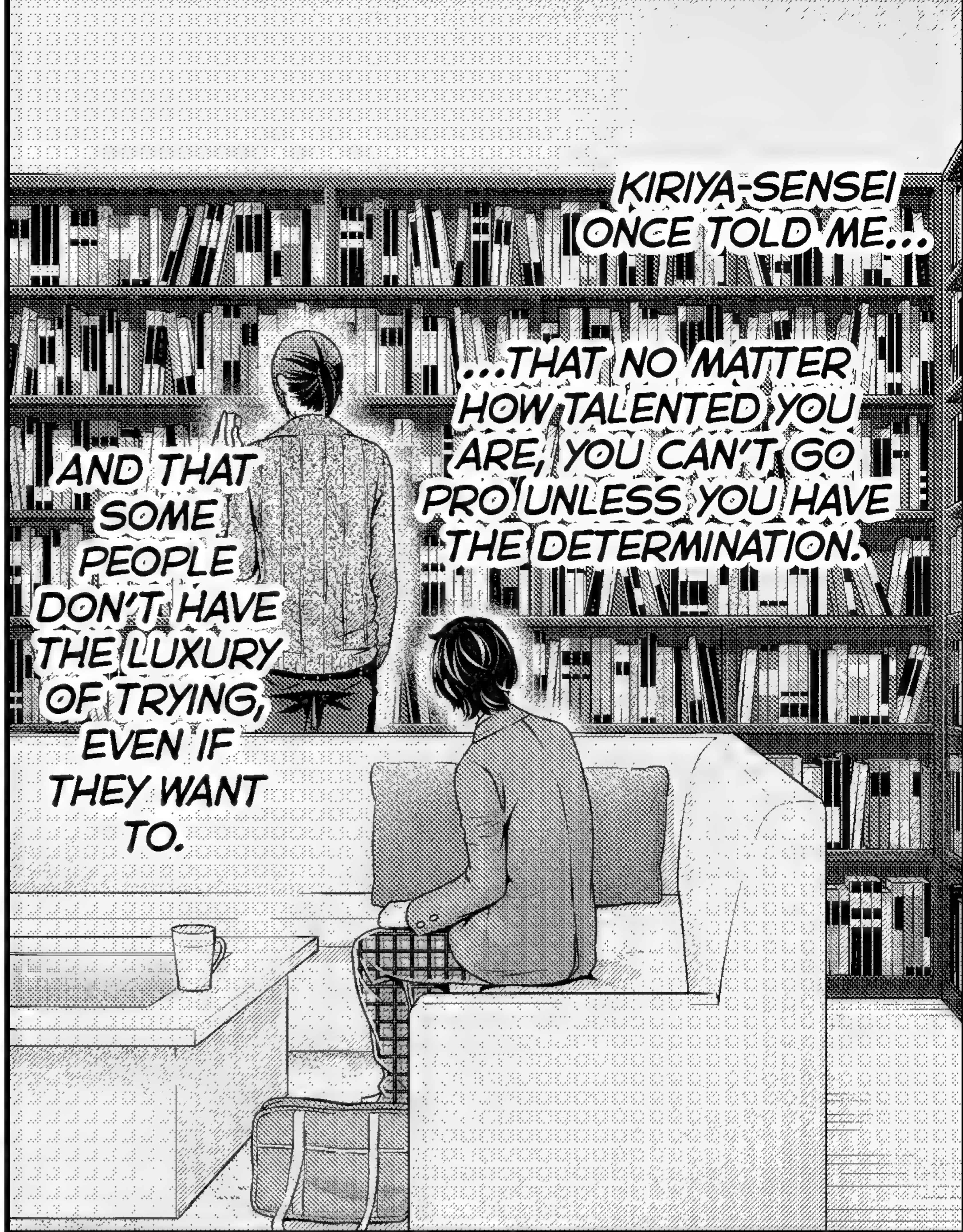




AS SOMEONE
WHO'S IN A
POSITION
WHERE I CAN
GO FOR IT...

...I NEED TO
WORK TWICE
AS HARD.

I'M
HOME!



KIRIYA-SENSEI
ONCE TOLD ME...

...THAT NO MATTER
HOW TALENTED YOU
ARE, YOU CAN'T GO
PRO UNLESS YOU HAVE
THE DETERMINATION.

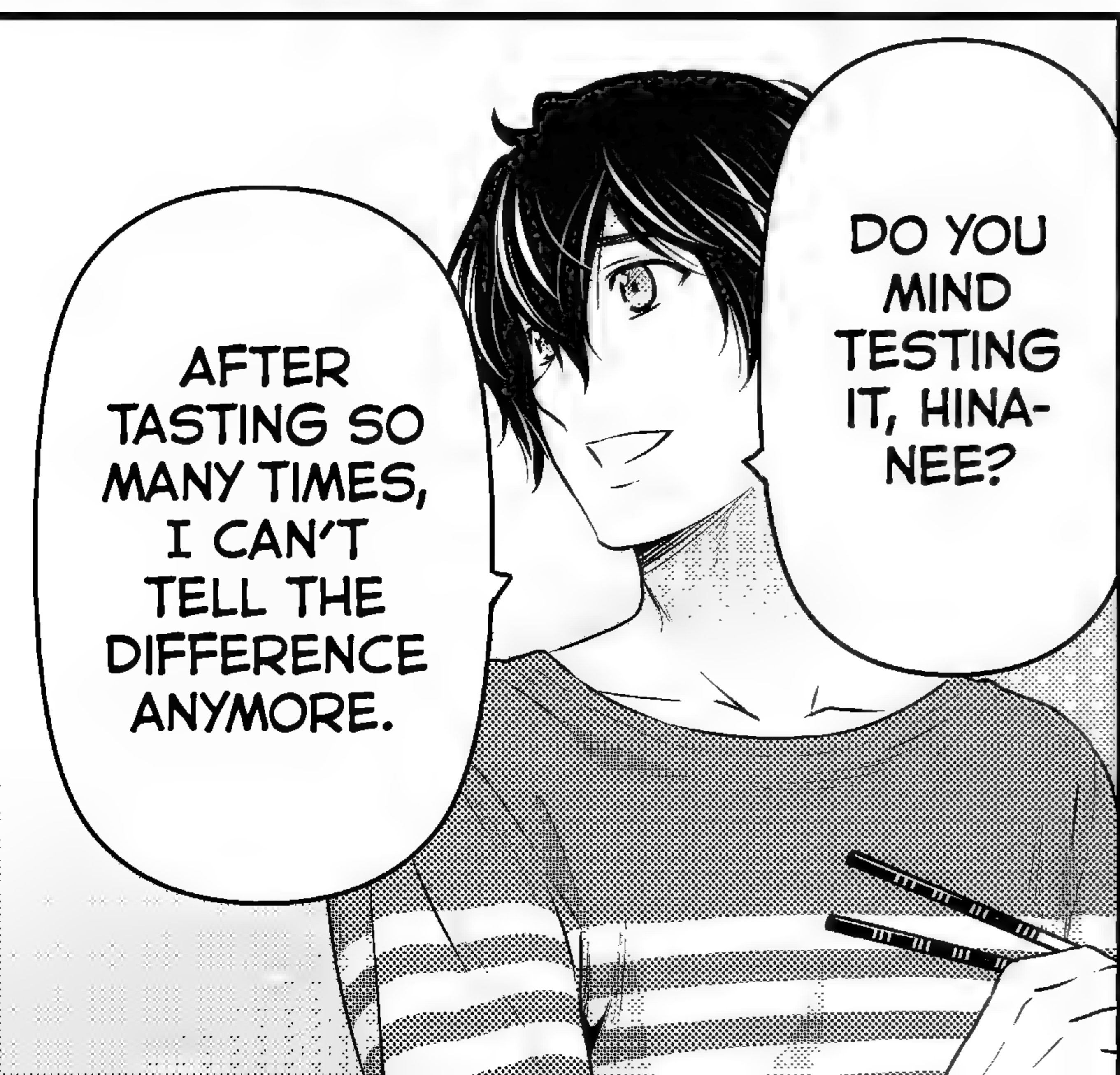
AND THAT
SOME
PEOPLE
DON'T HAVE
THE LUXURY
OF TRYING,
EVEN IF
THEY WANT
TO.



OOH!

THAT
SOUNDS
GREAT
WITH
RICE.

STIR-
FRIED
EGGPLANT
WITH
MISO.



AFTER
TASTING SO
MANY TIMES,
I CAN'T
TELL THE
DIFFERENCE
ANYMORE.

DO YOU
MIND
TESTING
IT, HINA-
NEE?



HEY!

SOME-
THING
SMELLS
GOOD!

WHAT'RE
YOU
MAKING?





SHE SAID
SHE'S
GONNA START
PRACTICING
ONCE HER
HAND HEALS
A LITTLE
MORE.

I SEE...
SOUNDS
LIKE SHE'S
THINKING
POSITIVE
AGAIN.



HEY,
NATSUO-
KUN.



HUH
...?

IF THAT'S
MAKING IT
HARD FOR
YOU TO GET
BY, THEN
I'M PARTLY
RESPONSI-
BLE...

I MEAN,
I'M THE
ONE WHO
BOUGHT
YOU A
SMART-
PHONE.



IF
MONEY'S
TIGHT...

...WANT
ME TO
HELP YOU
OUT A
LITTLE?



I'M PRETTY SURE THIS MONEY THING'S A HURDLE I NEED TO GET OVER MYSELF.

I HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN RIGHT NOW.



BUT ...

NO WAY. I CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT.

IT'S NOT LIKE MY PHONE BILL'S THE ONLY THING DRAINING MY WALLET.



I APPRECIATE IT.

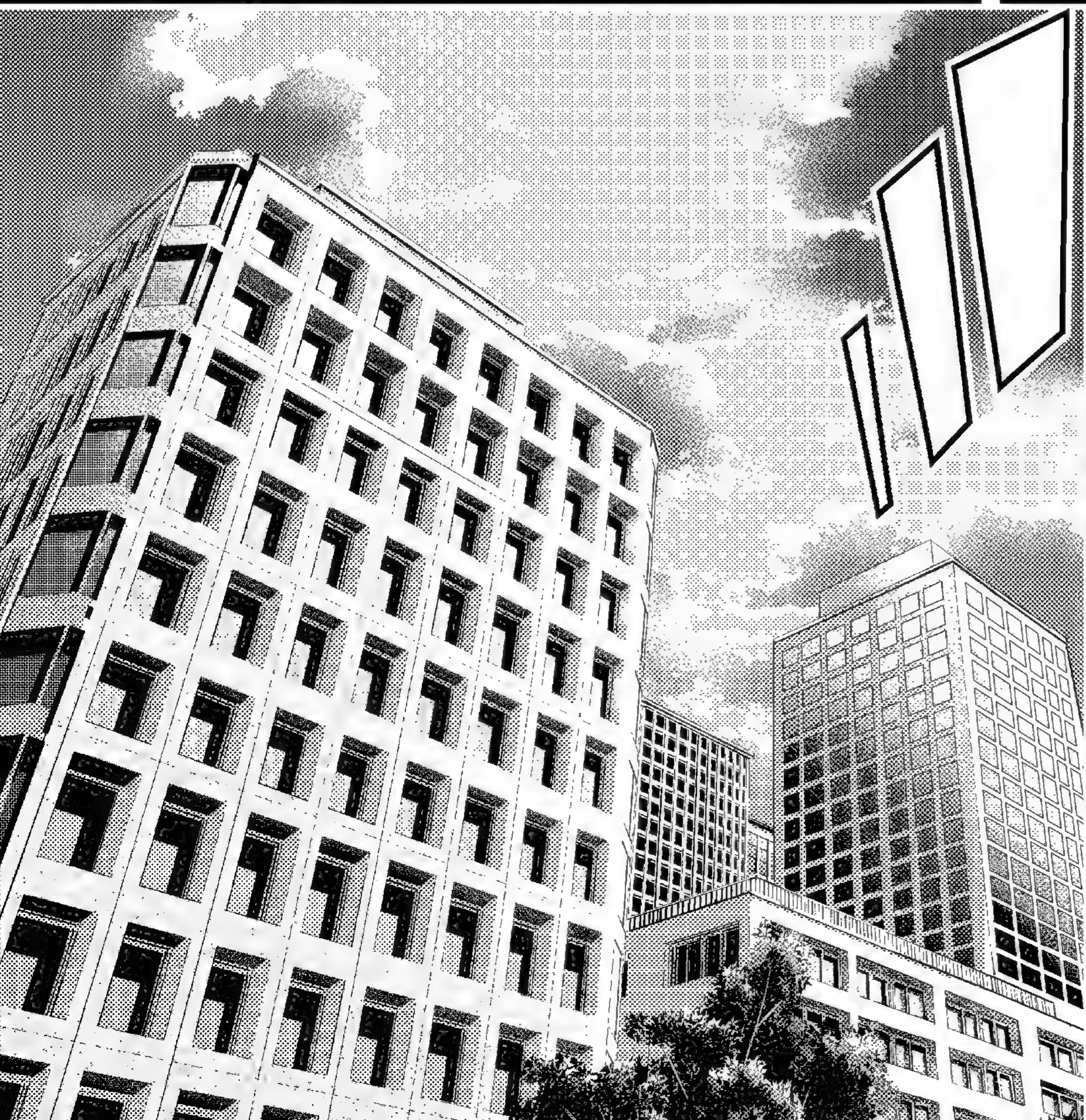
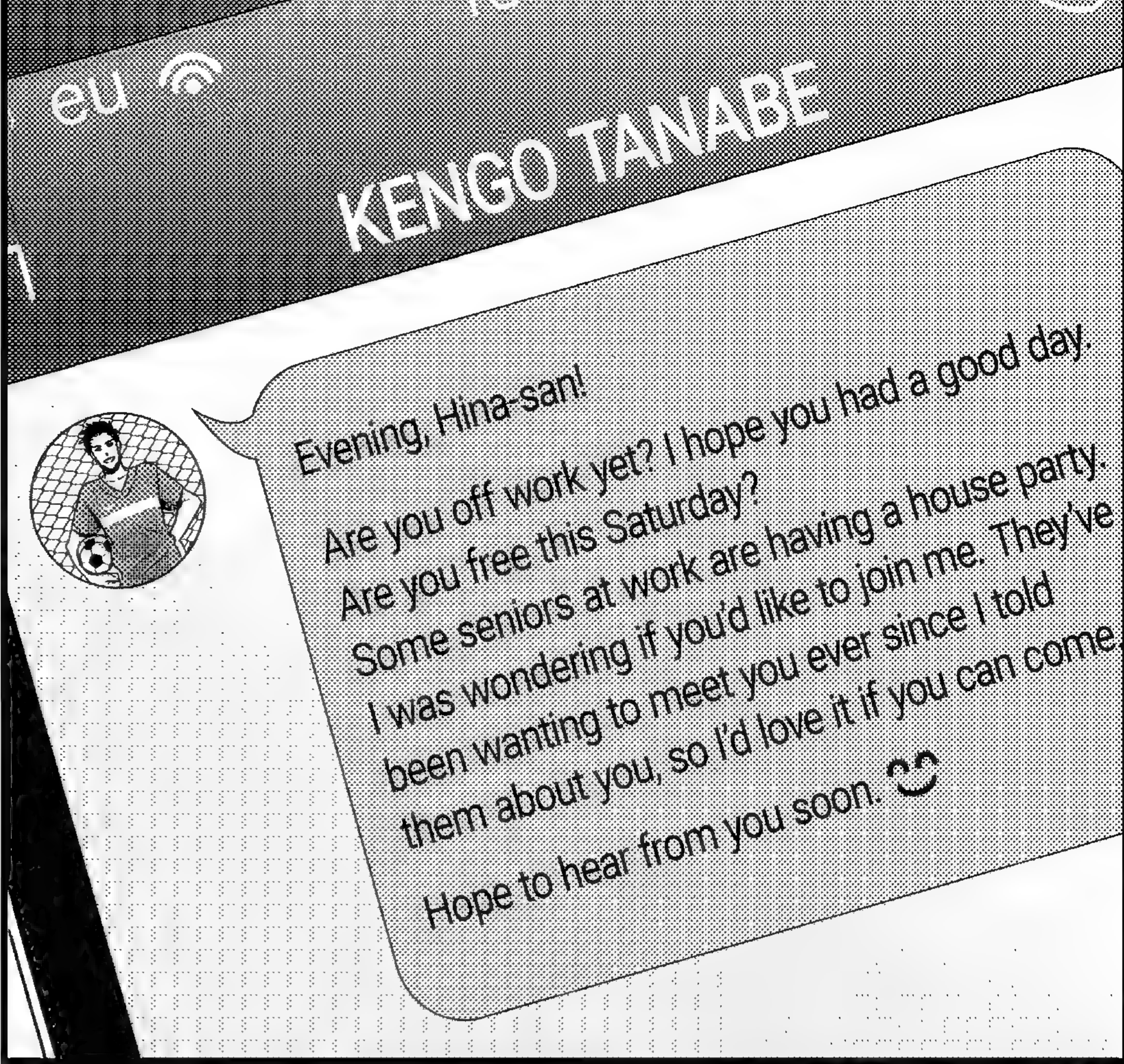
BUT THANKS FOR YOUR CONCERN.

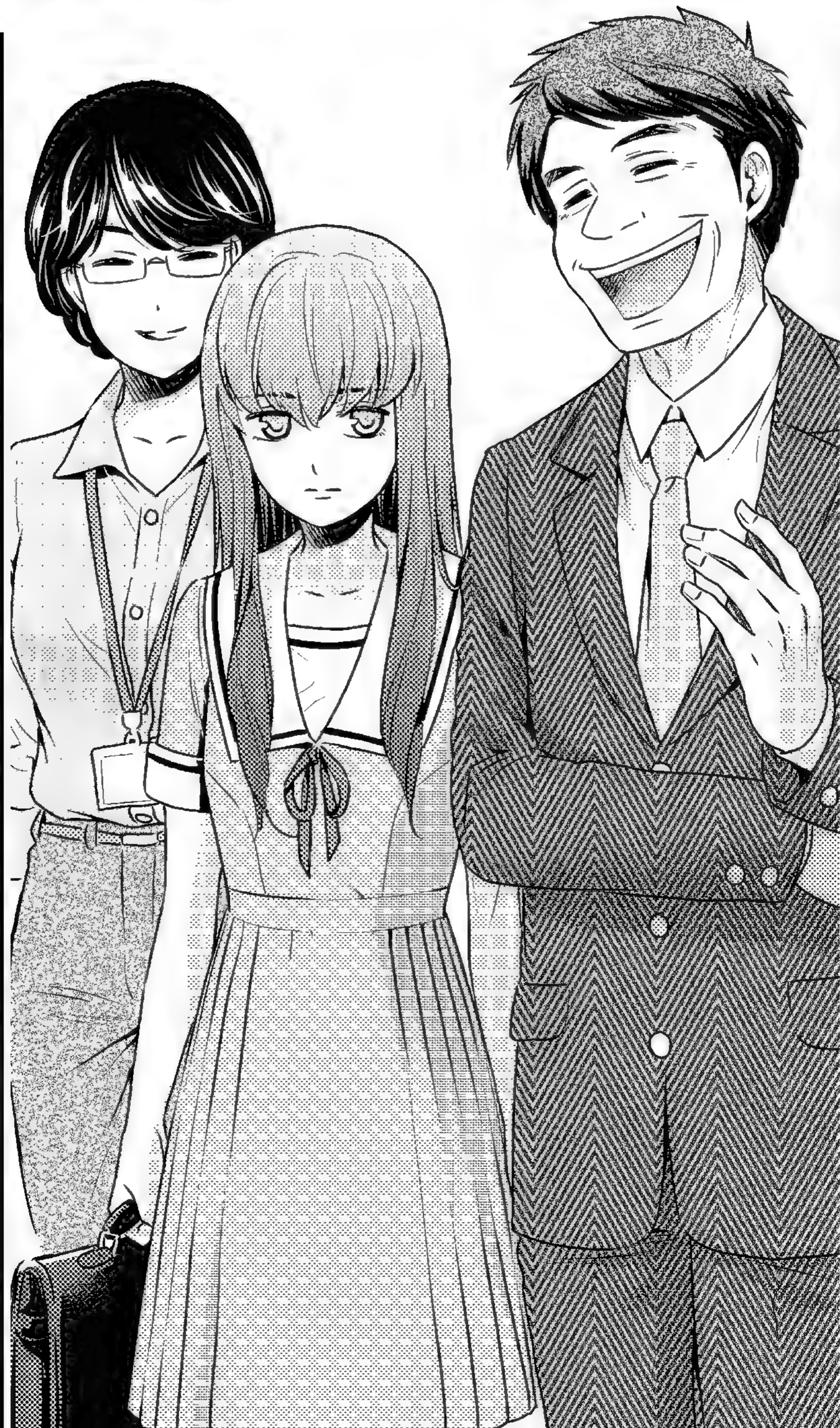


I SEE ...

WELL, LET ME KNOW IF THINGS REALLY GET BAD, OKAY?

DING DING





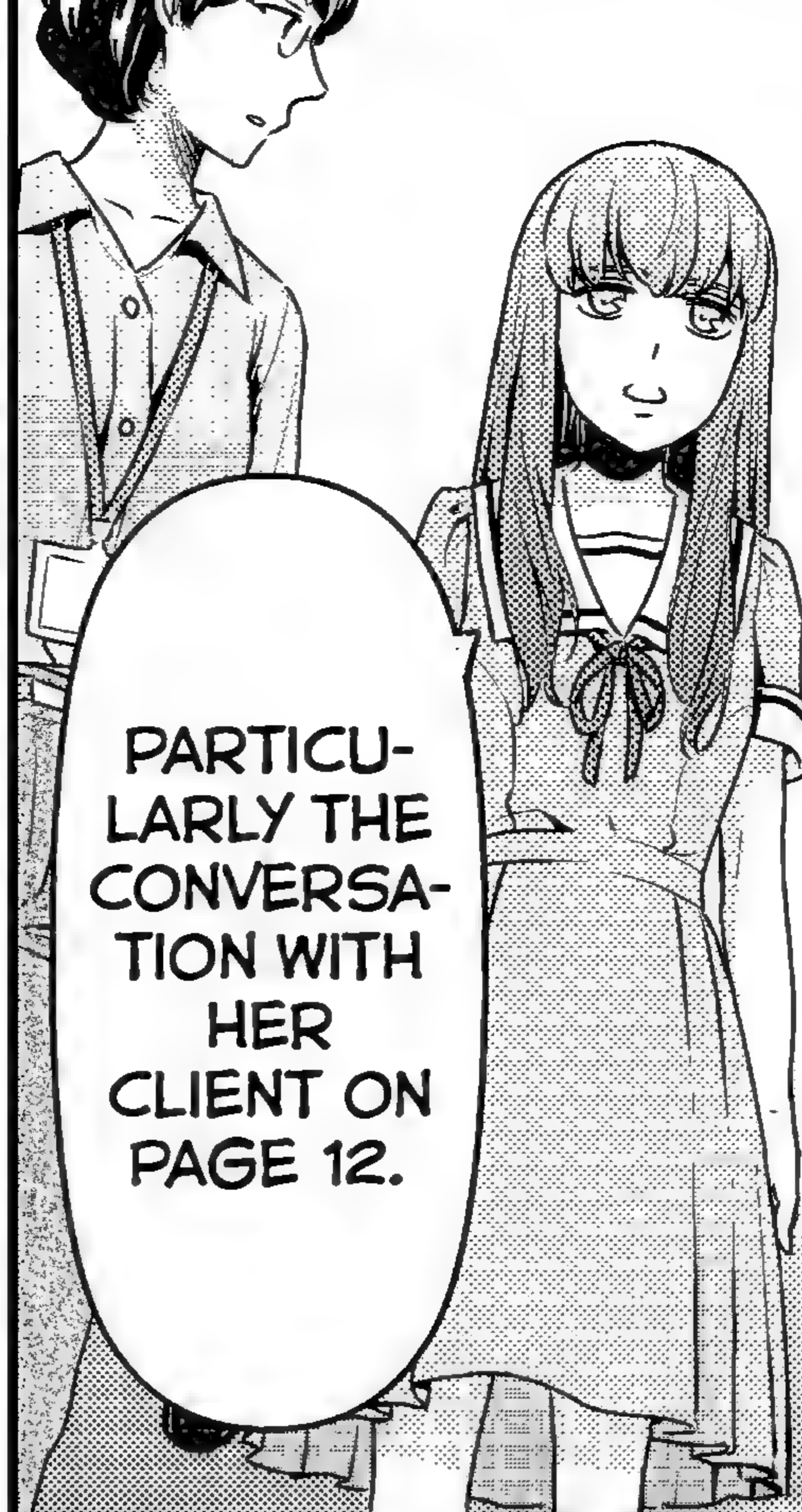




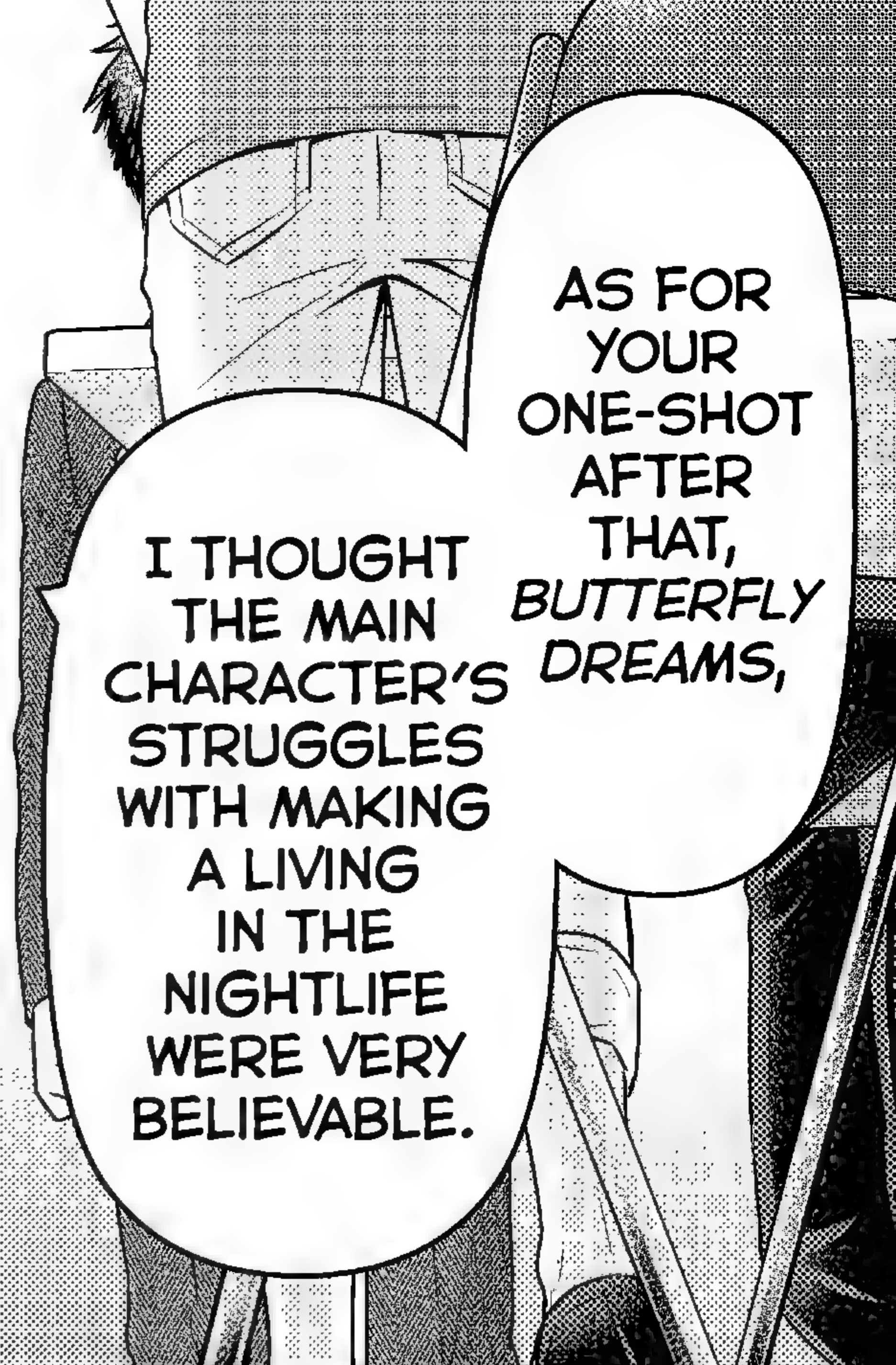
UM...

THANK
YOU VERY
MUCH...

THAT
SAID,



PARTICU-
LARLY THE
CONVERSA-
TION WITH
HER
CLIENT ON
PAGE 12.



AS FOR
YOUR
ONE-SHOT
AFTER
THAT,
BUTTERFLY
DREAMS,

I THOUGHT
THE MAIN
CHARACTER'S
STRUGGLES
WITH MAKING
A LIVING
IN THE
NIGHTLIFE
WERE VERY
BELIEVABLE.



...THIS
IS MY
HONEST
OPINION.

AFTER
READING
THEM OVER
A FEW MORE
TIMES...




**THEY'RE ALL
AVERAGE.**

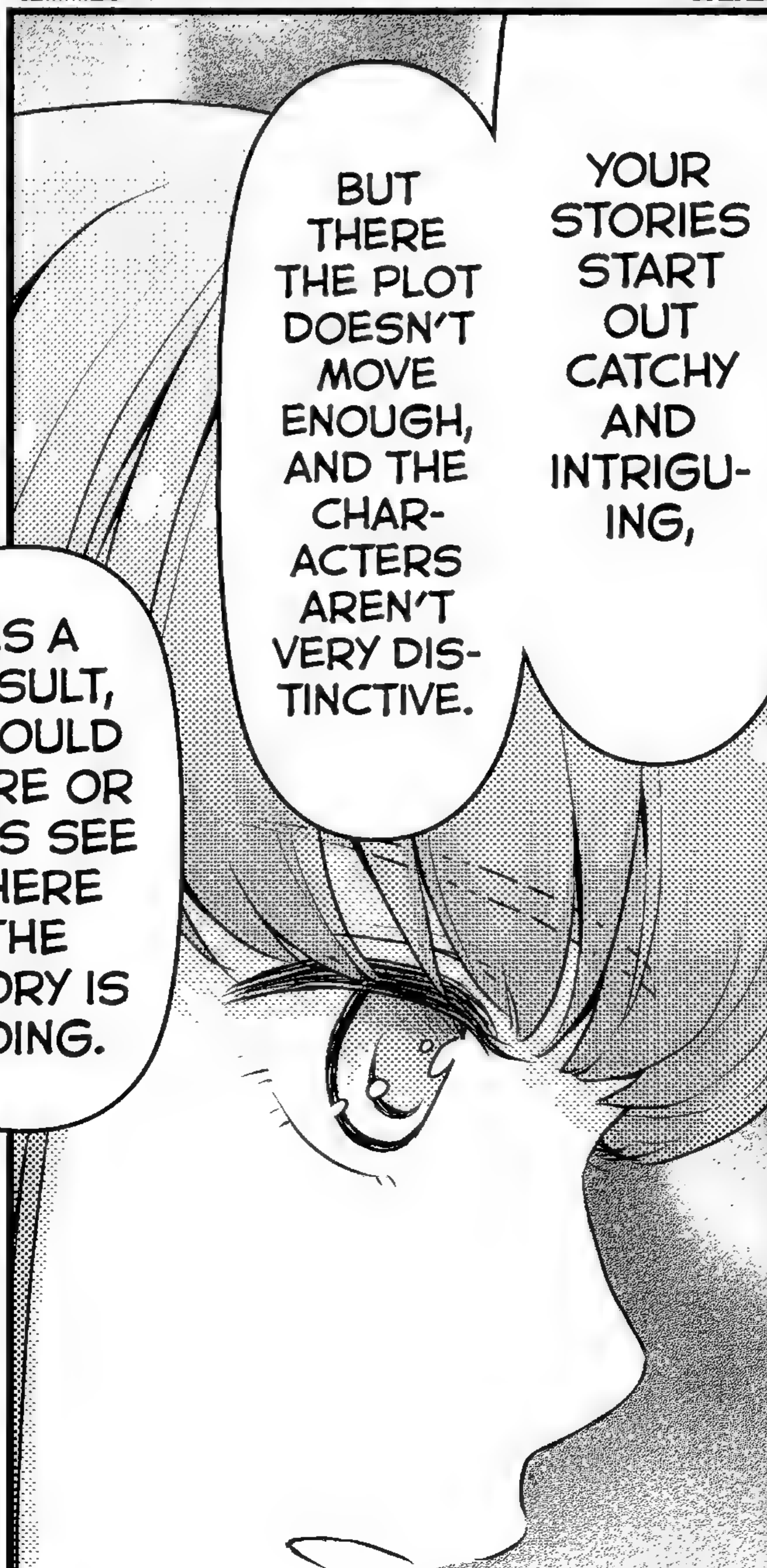
**QUITE
FRANKLY,**



CHAPTER 163: TO A NEW SELF




ALL IN ALL, I FELT THAT THEY WERE "AVERAGE STORIES ABOUT AVERAGE PEOPLE."



AS A RESULT, I COULD MORE OR LESS SEE WHERE THE STORY IS GOING.

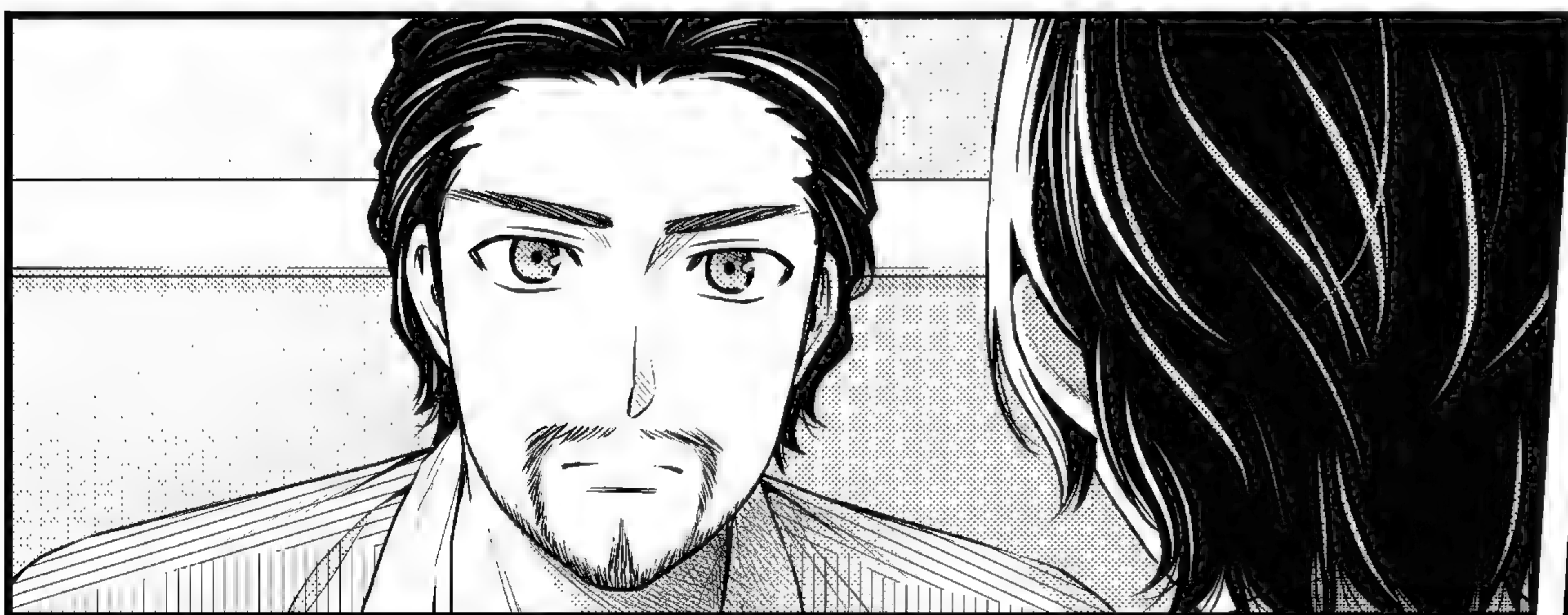
BUT THERE THE PLOT DOESN'T MOVE ENOUGH, AND THE CHARACTERS AREN'T VERY DISTINCTIVE.

YOUR STORIES START OUT CATCHY AND INTRIGUING,



A-
AVER-
AGE?

YES.





OF
COURSE
I'M
UPSET.

I'M
FRUS-
TRATED
AS
HELL!



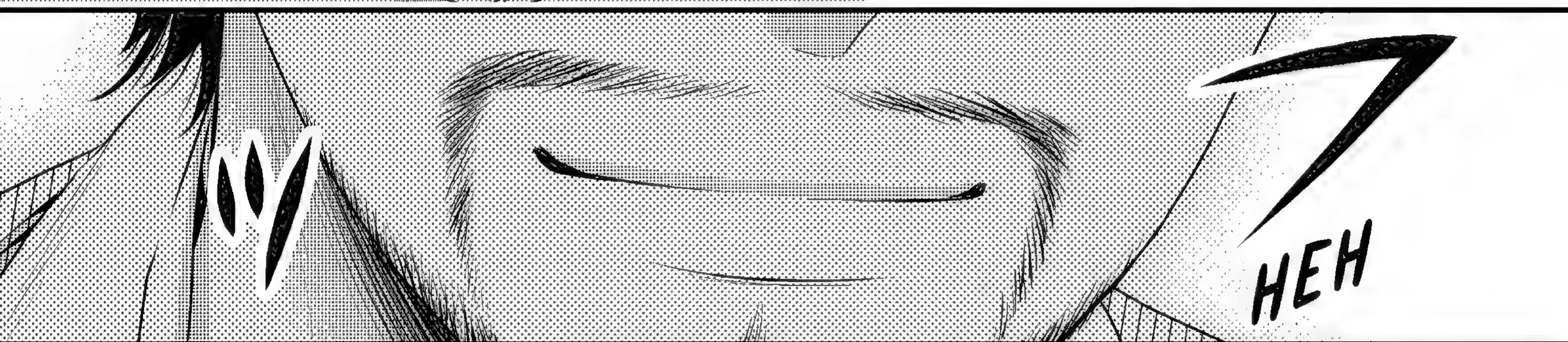
DO YOU
EVEN HAVE
TO ASK,

TSU-
TAYA-
SAN?

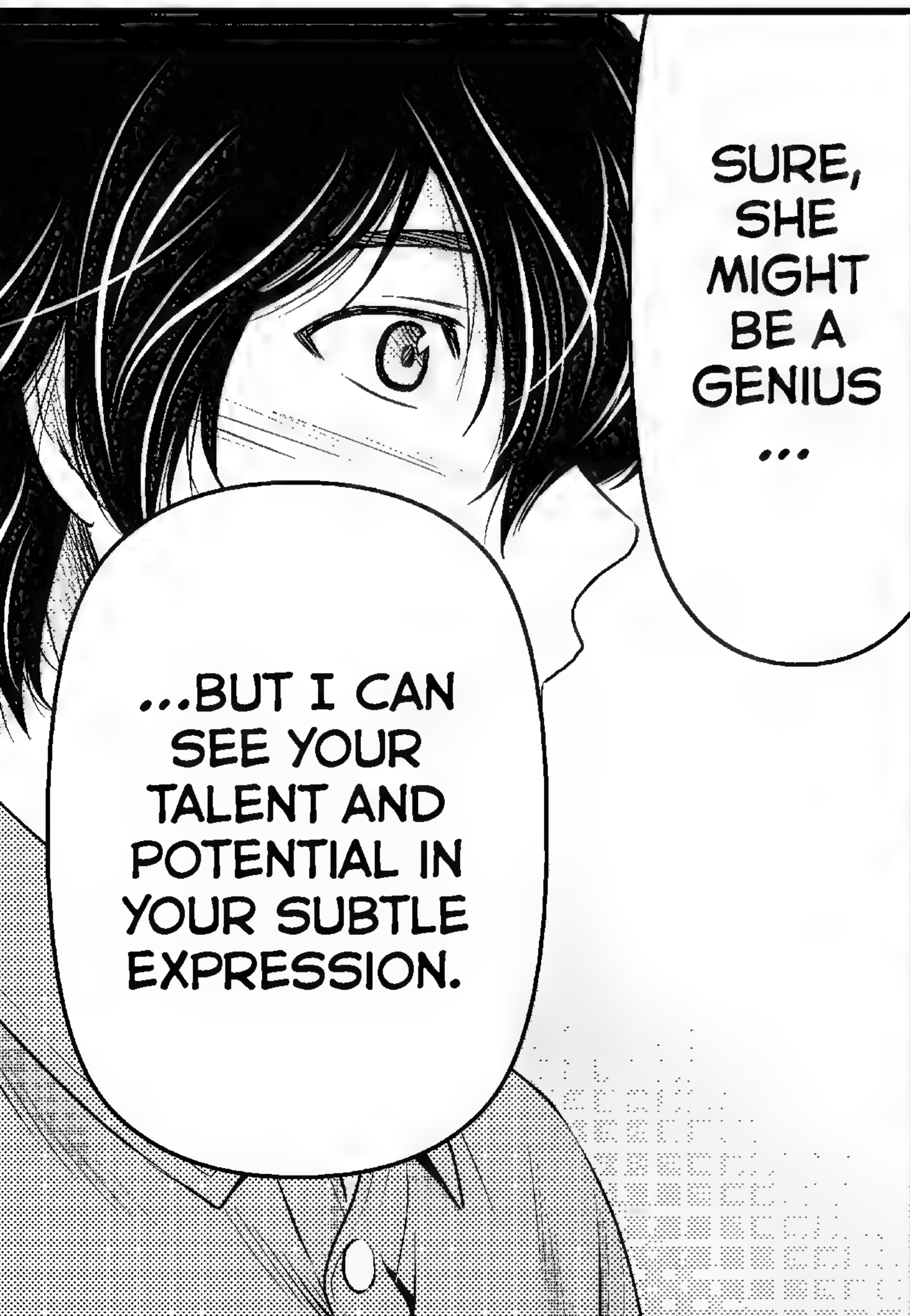


...

HOW'D
HEARING
THAT MAKE
YOU FEEL?



HEH



SURE,
SHE
MIGHT
BE A
GENIUS
...

...BUT I CAN
SEE YOUR
TALENT AND
POTENTIAL IN
YOUR SUBTLE
EXPRESSION.



JOLT

I'M
STEAMING,
TOO!



**ONE
THAT'LL
FLY OFF
THE
SHELVES!**

**LET'S
MAKE A
GREAT
BOOK!**



**YOUR
WRITING
MIGHT NOT BE
FLASHY, BUT
I'M CONFIDENT
THAT IT CAN
STRIKE A
CHORD WITH
READERS
AS IT IS.**

**IT JUST
NEEDS SOME
REFINING.**

**A LITTLE
BRUSH-
ING UP,
Y'KNOW?**





MMM.
I'LL TAKE
ONE IN THE
MORNING.

ARE
YOU
GONNA
TAKE A
BATH
?

YOU'RE
STILL
UP?

WHAT'RE
YOU
READING?



OH, UM...
IT'S LIKE
THE TEST
RUN BEFORE
A BOOK IS
PUBLISHED.

PROOF
?

AN
AMATEUR
AUTHOR
HAS A BOOK
COMING
OUT SOON.
I ASKED TO
READ THE
PROOF.



...HM.

SO,

I WANTED
TO CHECK
OUT HER
WORK FOR
MYSELF,
AND...

...SHE'S A
GENIUS 15-YEAR
OLD AUTHOR
WHO'S STILL IN
HIGH SCHOOL.

APPAR-
ENTLY...

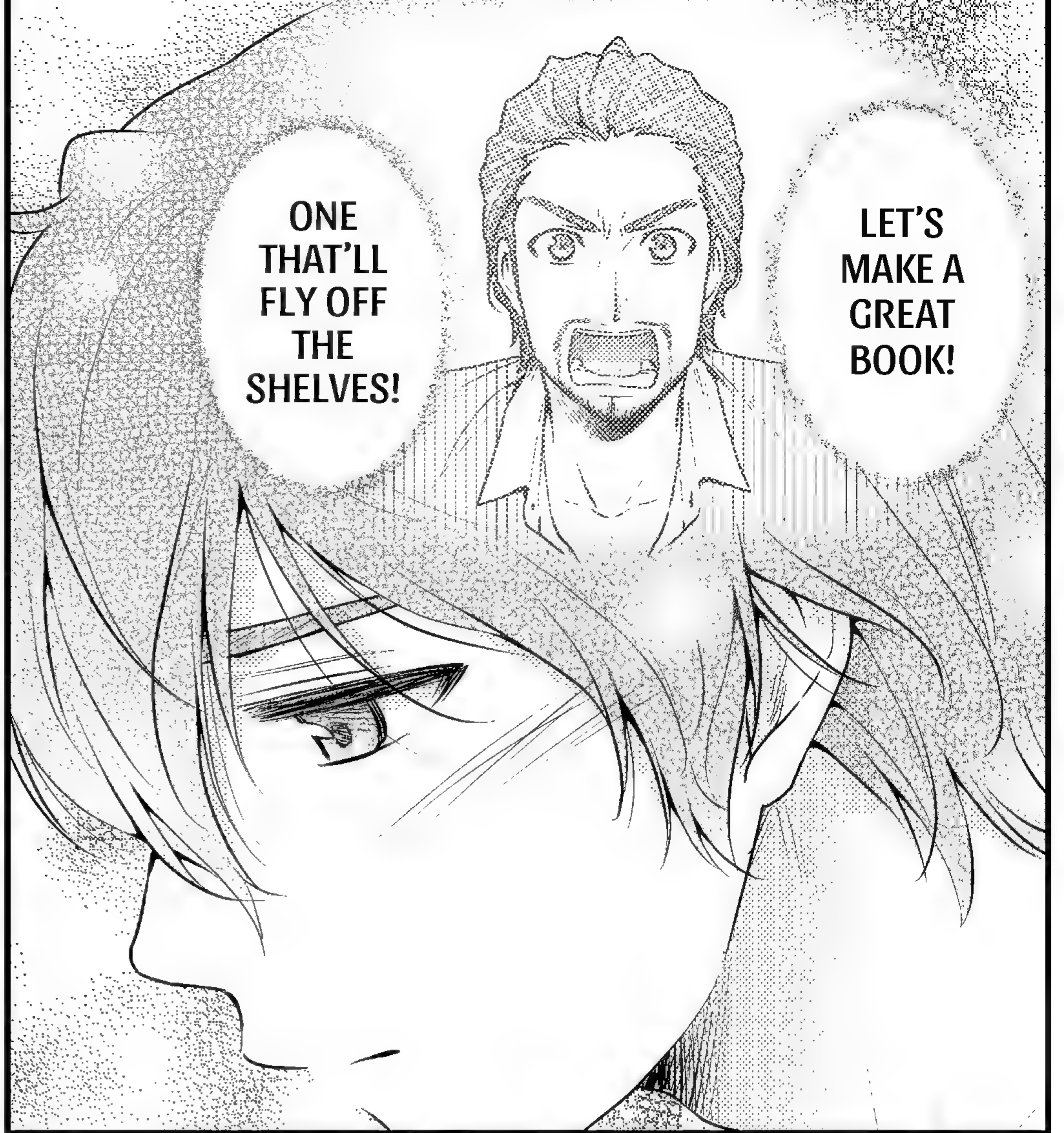




HEY, RUI.
YOU HAVE
A LOT OF
MYSTERY
BOOKS
AND STUFF
LIKE THAT,
RIGHT?

BUT
YOUR
STORIES
ARE—

MIND IF I
BORROW
SOME?



ONE
THAT'LL
FLY OFF
THE
SHELVES!

LET'S
MAKE A
GREAT
BOOK!



NO
PROB-
LEM.

...
SURE.



ALL RIGHT.
GROUP UP,
Y'ALL.

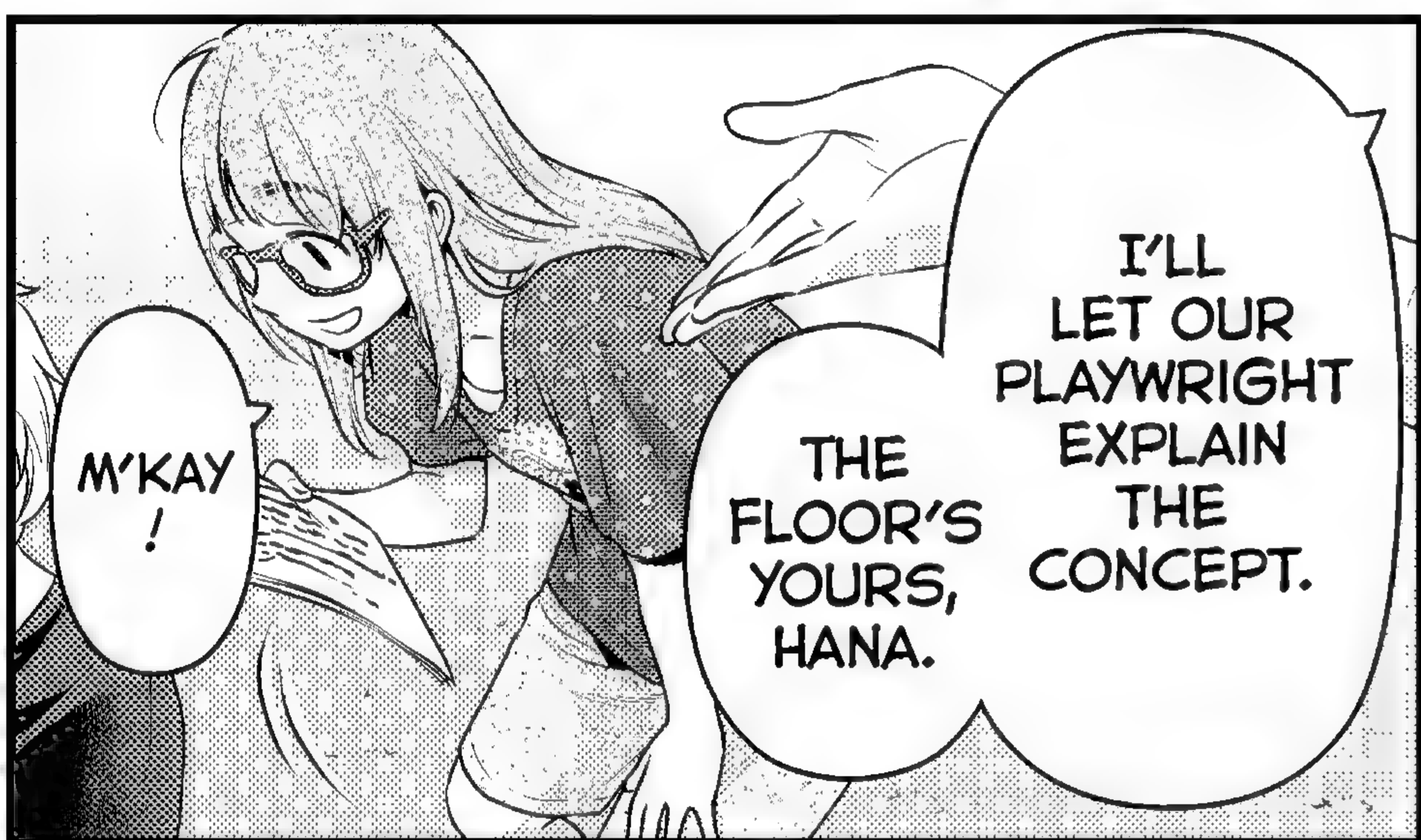
CRASH
CRASH
CRASH





DOES
EVERYONE
HAVE A
COPY?

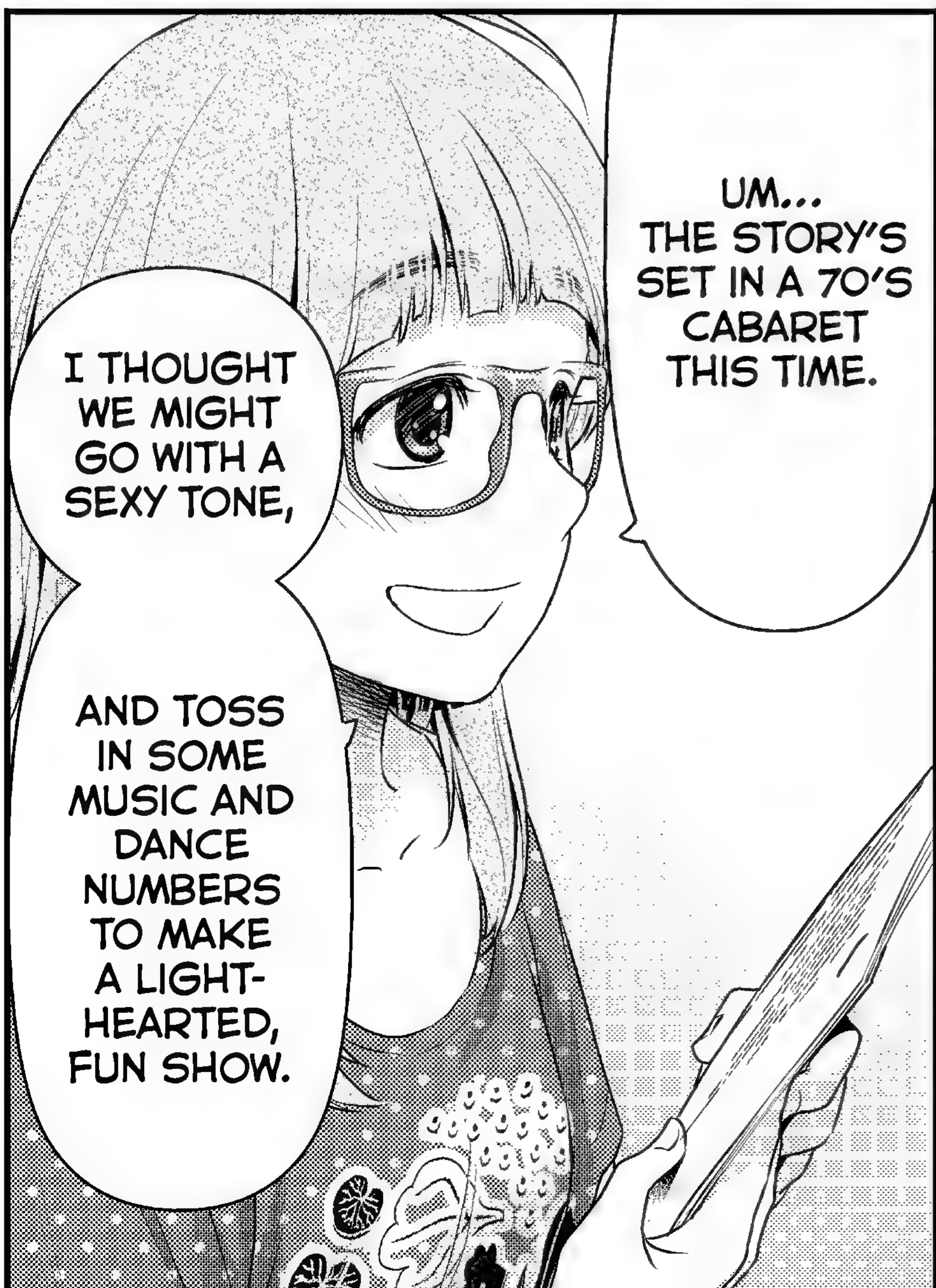
WE'LL BE
GOING OVER
OUR NEXT
PLAY NOW.



M'KAY
!

THE
FLOOR'S
YOURS,
HANA.

I'LL
LET OUR
PLAYWRIGHT
EXPLAIN
THE
CONCEPT.



I THOUGHT
WE MIGHT
GO WITH A
SEXY TONE,

AND TOSS
IN SOME
MUSIC AND
DANCE
NUMBERS
TO MAKE
A LIGHT-
HEARTED,
FUN SHOW.

UM...
THE STORY'S
SET IN A 70'S
CABARET
THIS TIME.



WE'RE
AIMING
TO PUT
IT ON IN
NOVEM-
BER,

DURING
THE
SCHOOL
FESTIVAL.

WE GET A
BIG CROWD
EVERY YEAR
SINCE IT'S
ON CAMPUS
AND THE
TICKETS ARE
CHEAP.

LET'S DO
OUR BEST
TO PUT ON
A SHOW
THAT'LL
BLOW 'EM
AWAY.



THAT'S
THE
GIST
OF IT.

I'M GOING
TO HAMMER
OUT THE
DETAILS AS
WE GO, SO
BEAR WITH ME
IF IT ENDS UP
COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT!



THE
PROTAG-
ONIST IS
A DETEC-
TIVE.

BUT
GETTING
INVOLVED
WITH HER
ENDS UP
BACKFIRING
AND LANDS
HIM IN ALL
KINDS OF
TROUBLE.

HE GETS HIRED
TO INVESTIGATE
SOME SHADY
RUMORS
SURROUNDING
THE CABARET'S
PROPRIETRESS.



THE
CHARACTERS
ARE ALL
UNIQUE AND
LIKEABLE.

INCREDIBLE.

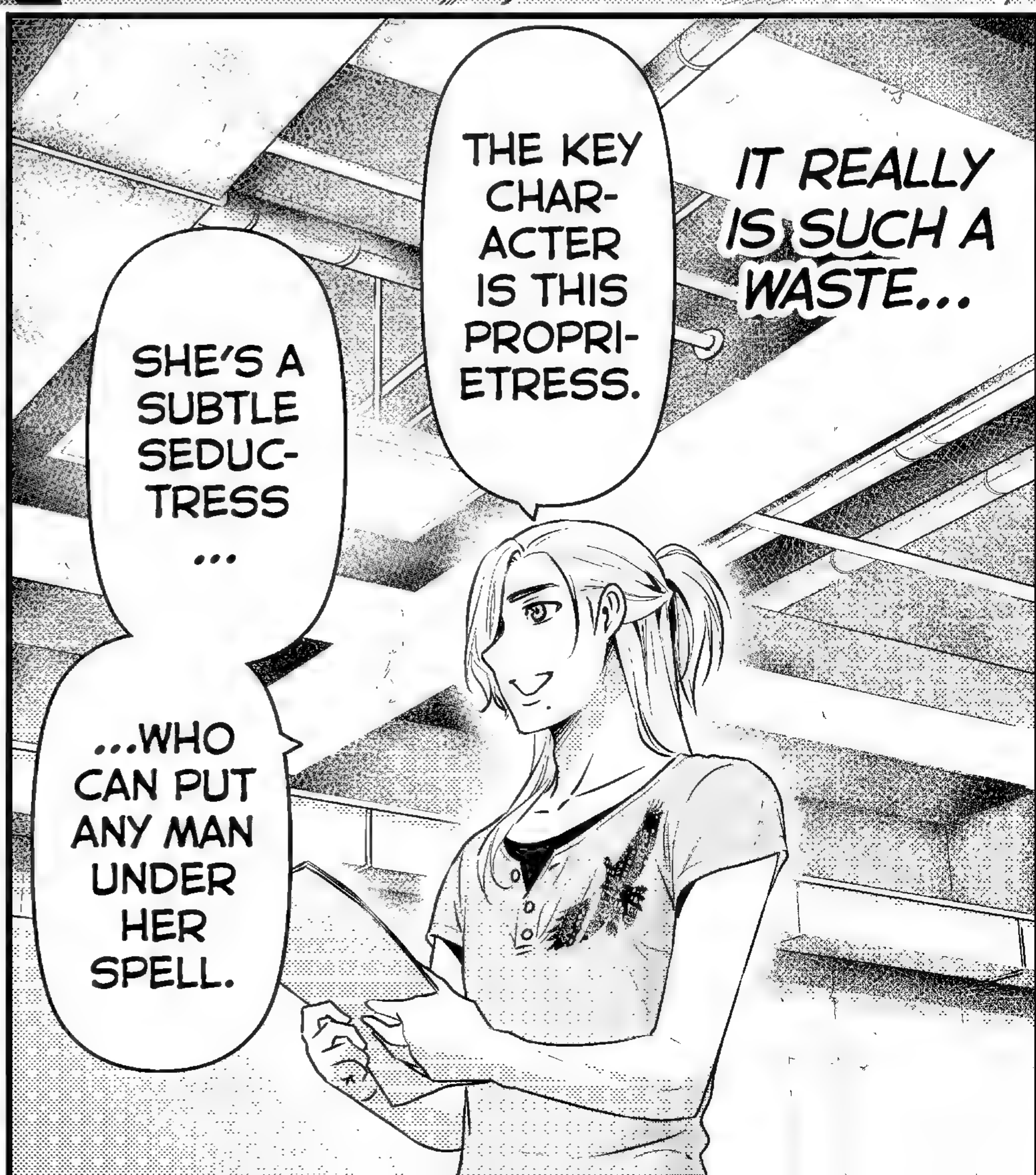
I CAN
ALREADY TELL
IT'LL BE GOOD
JUST FROM
THE SUMMARY.

THIS STORY
COULD TOTALLY
WORK AS A FULL
BOOK, OR EVEN
A DRAMA...



WE'LL
ANNOUNCE
AN AUDITION
DATE LATER.

ACTORS,
I WANT
YOU TO
WORK
WITH
THAT IN
MIND.

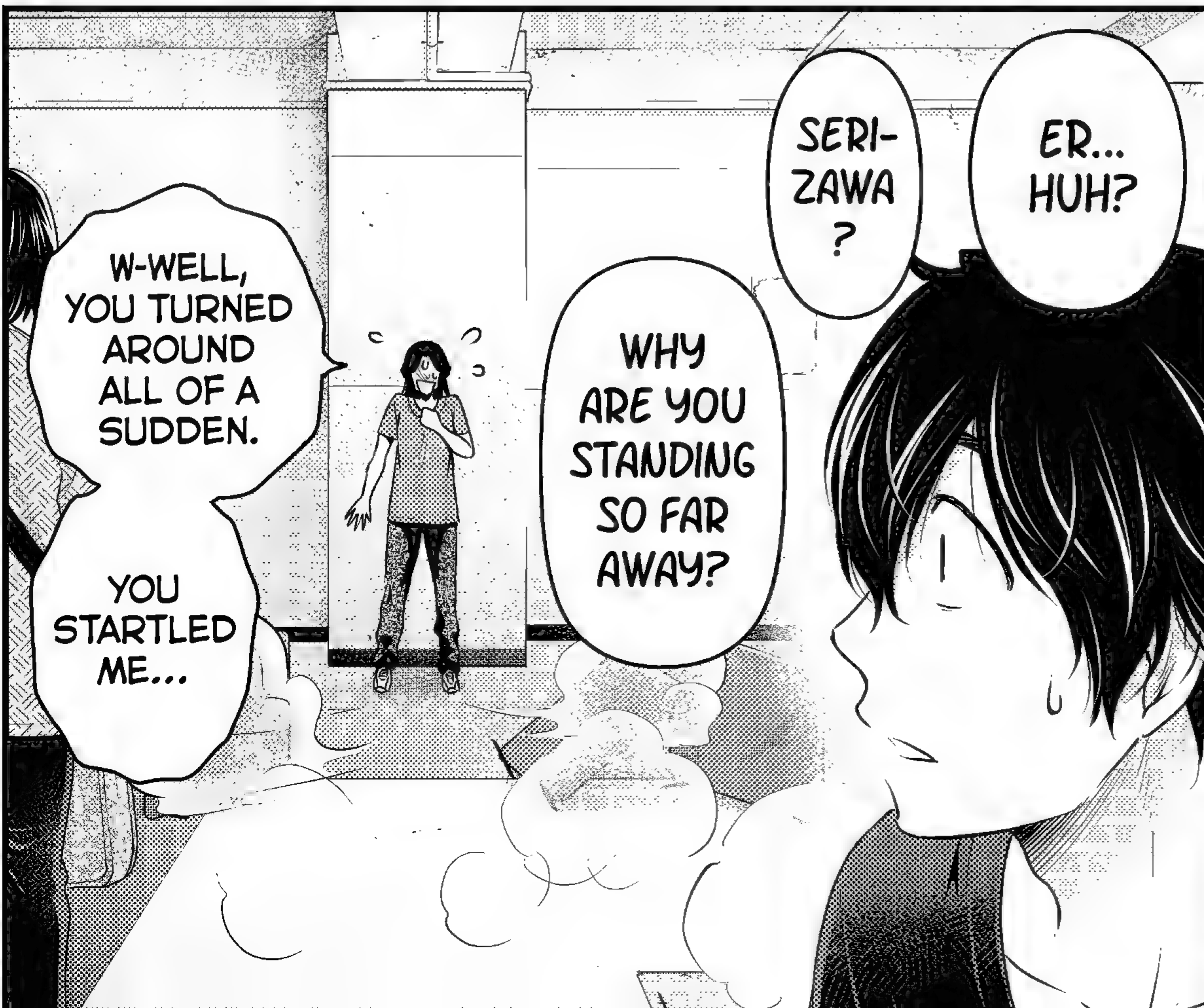
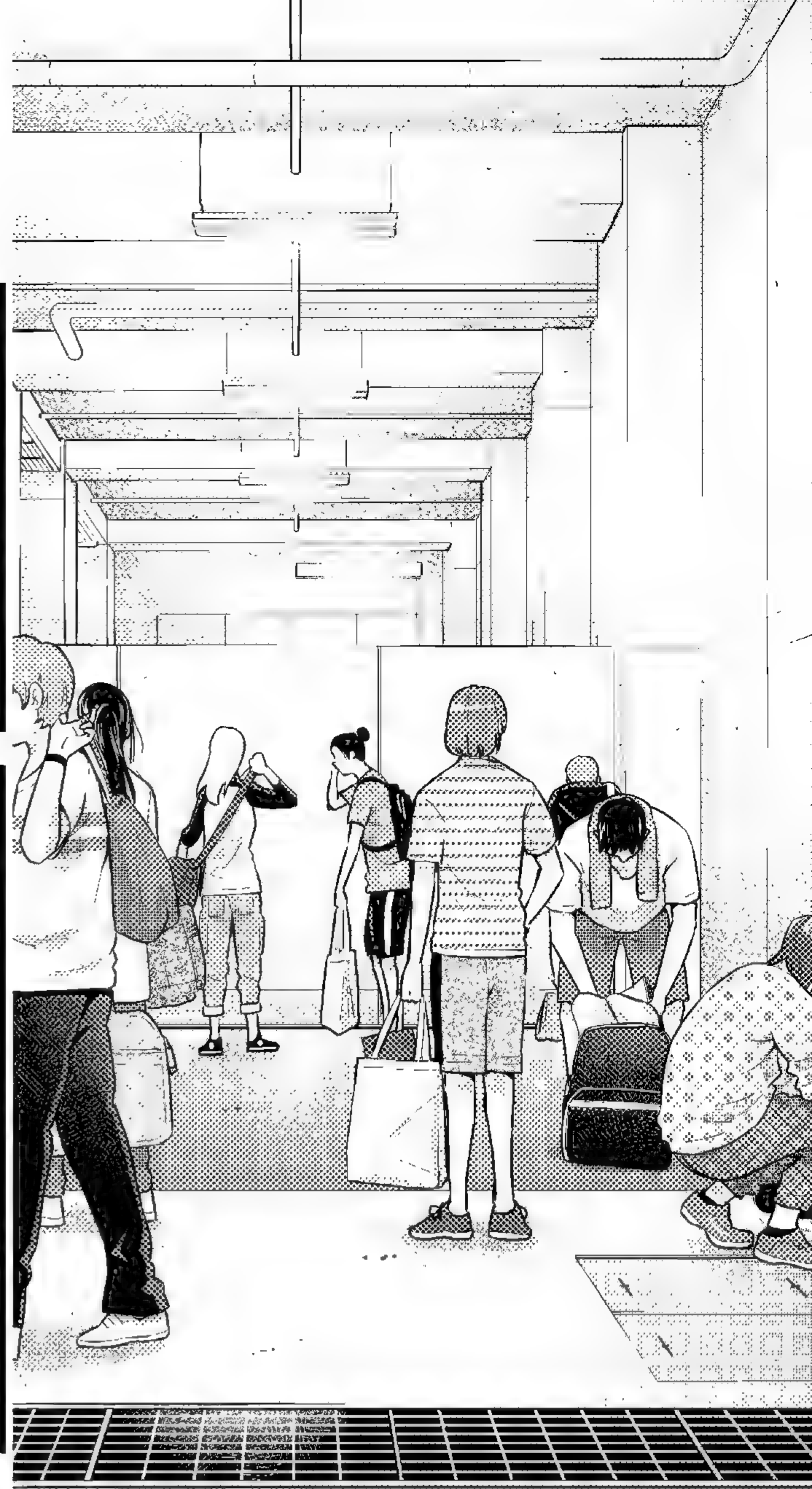
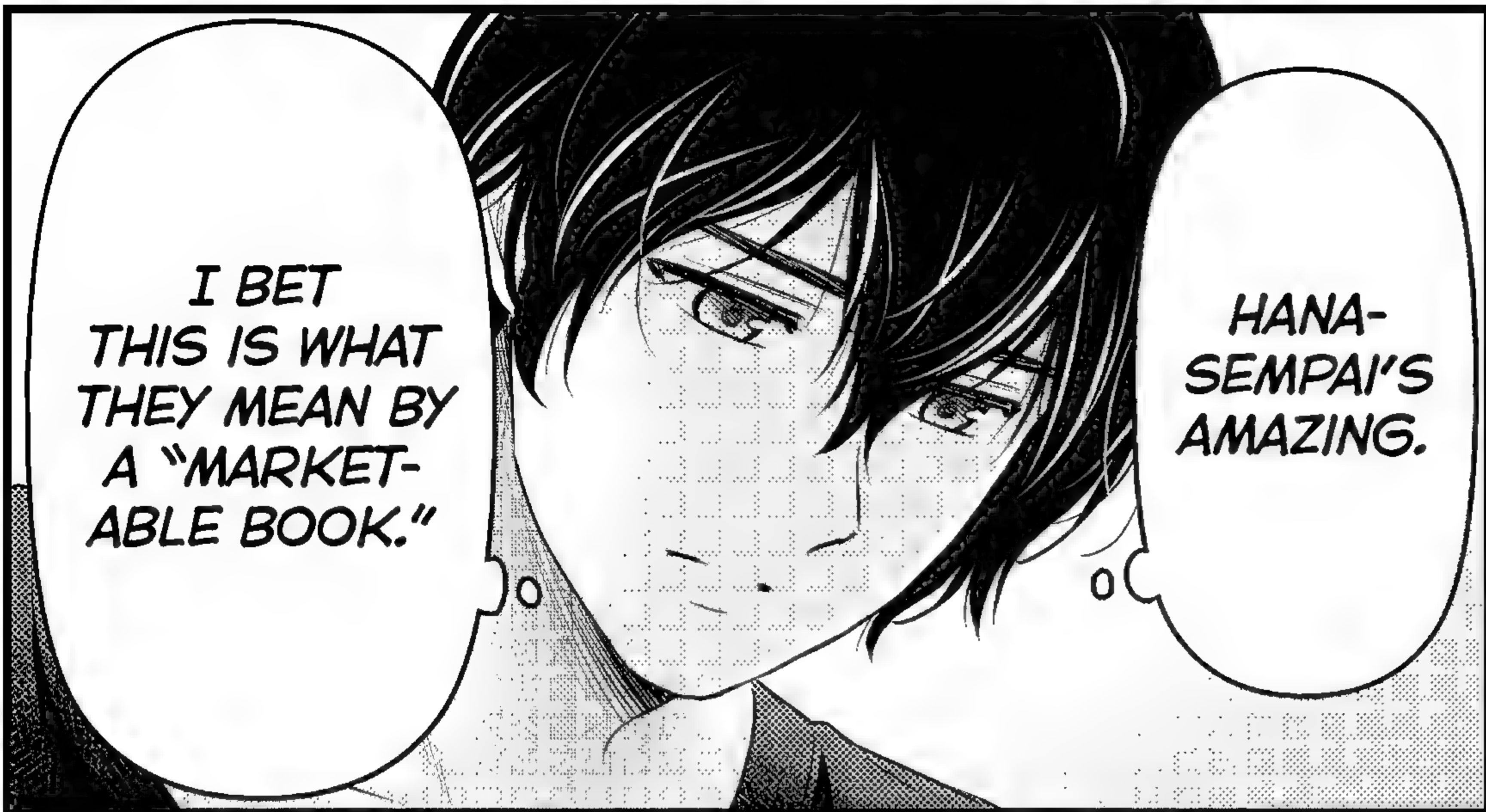
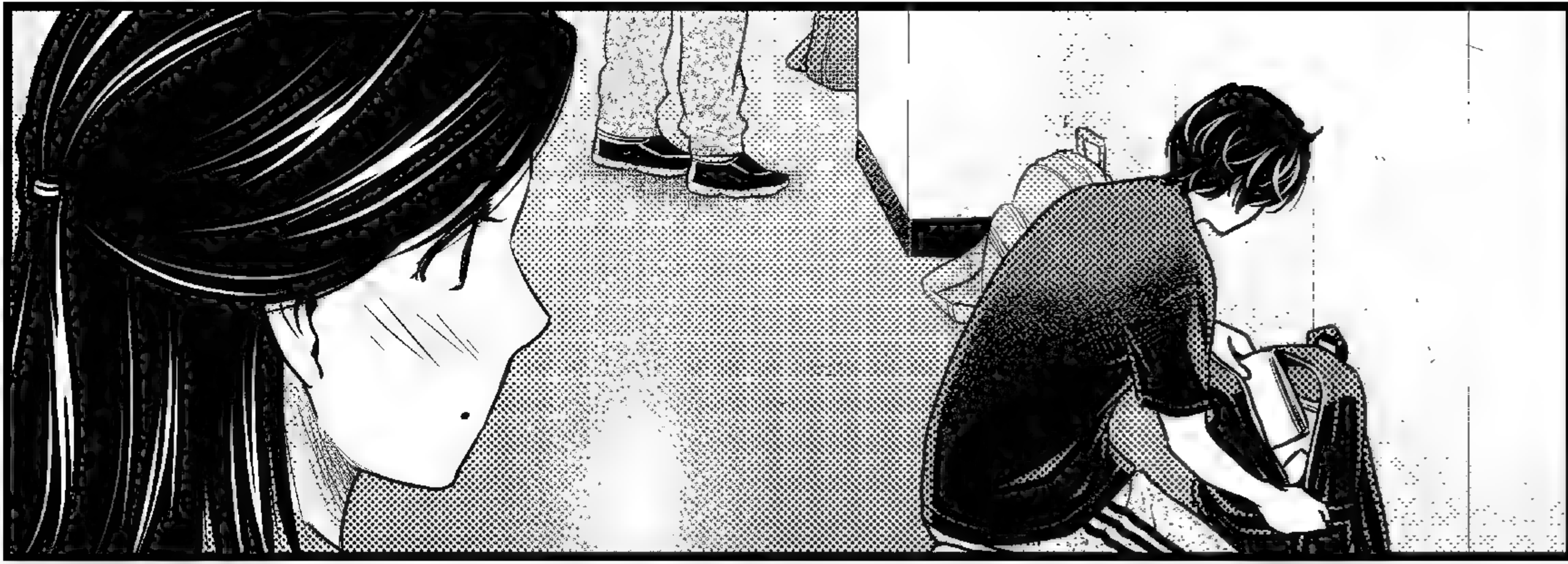


THE KEY
CHAR-
ACTER
IS THIS
PROPRI-
ETRESS.

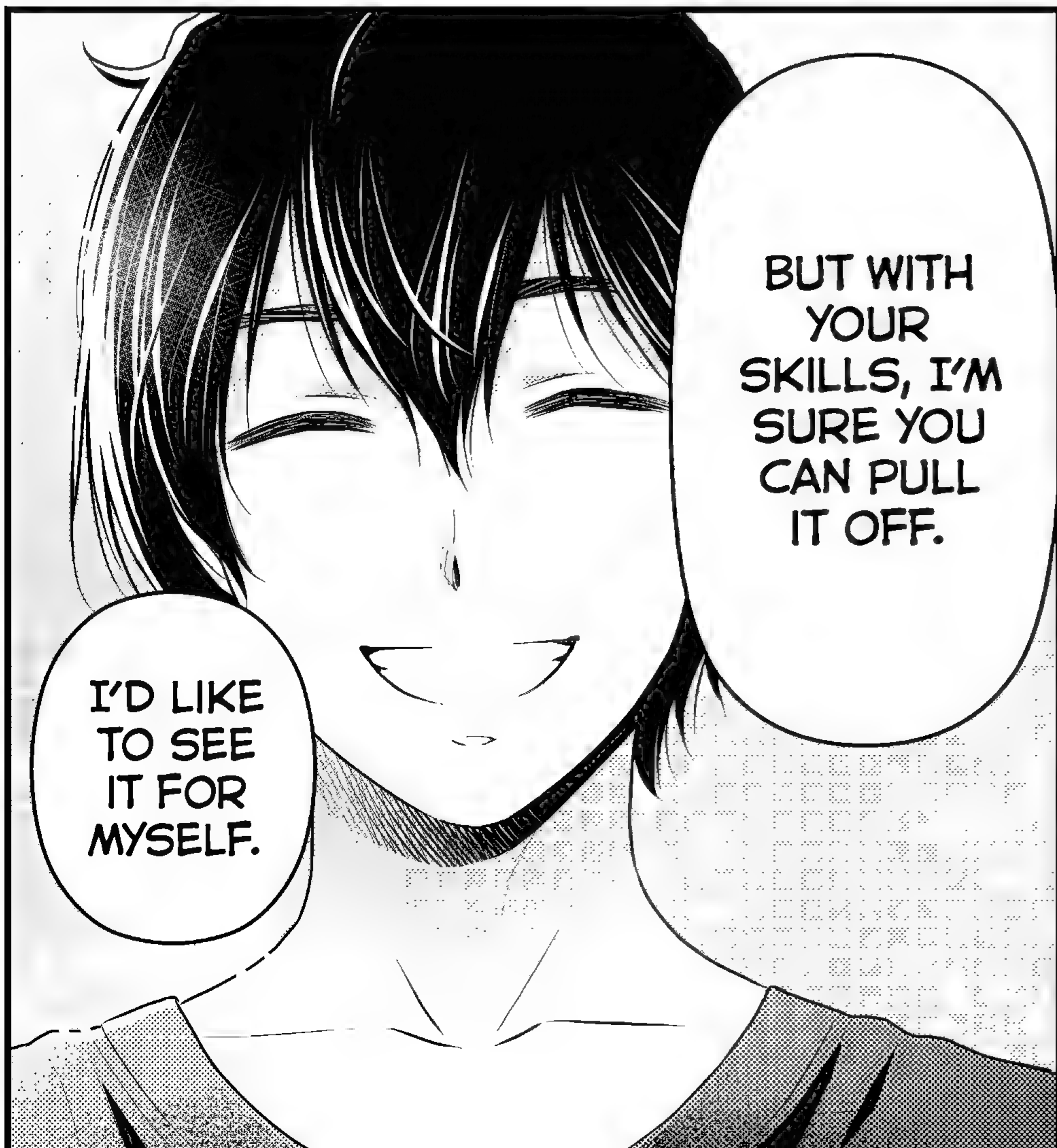
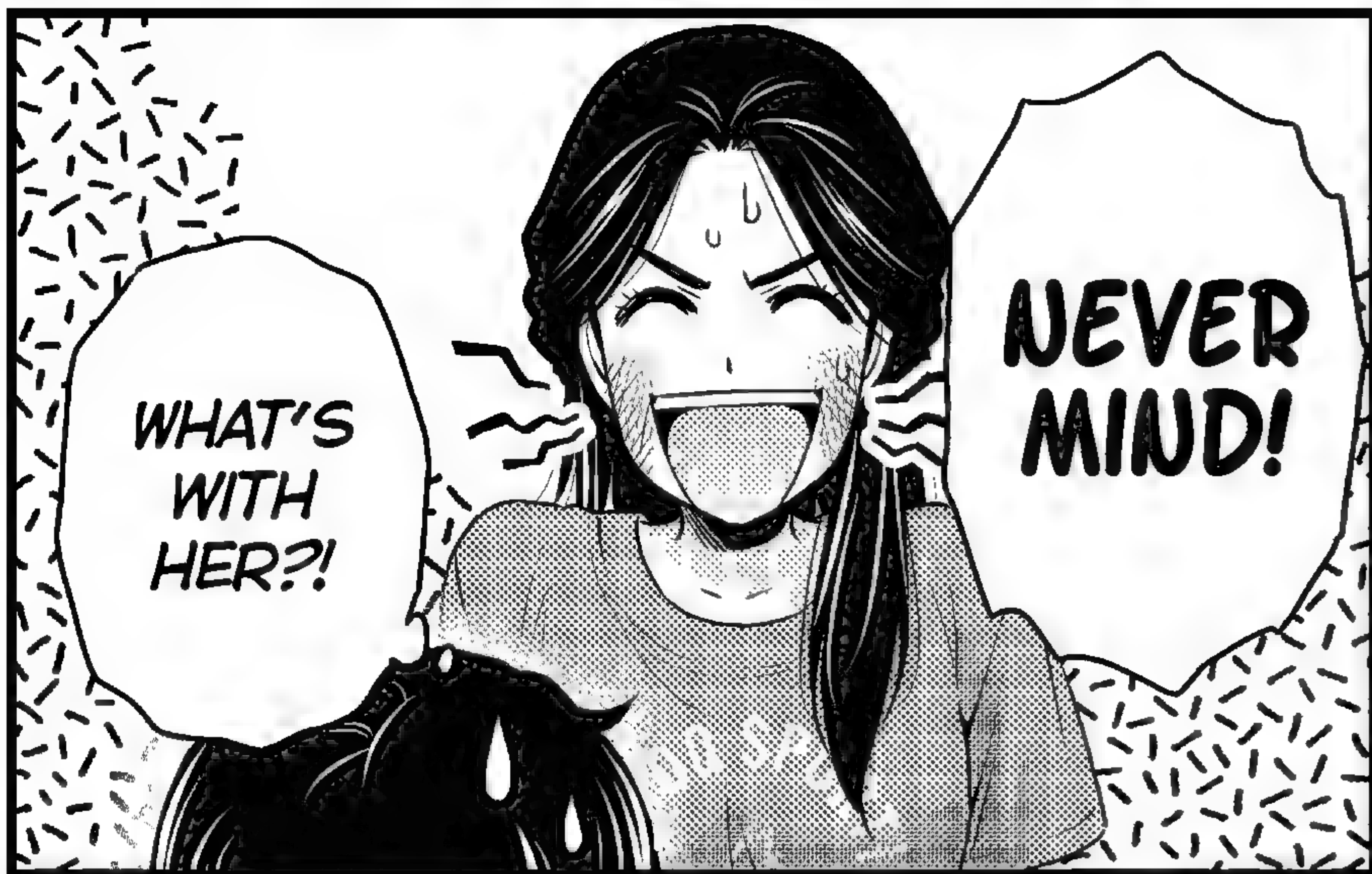
IT REALLY
IS SUCH A
WASTE...

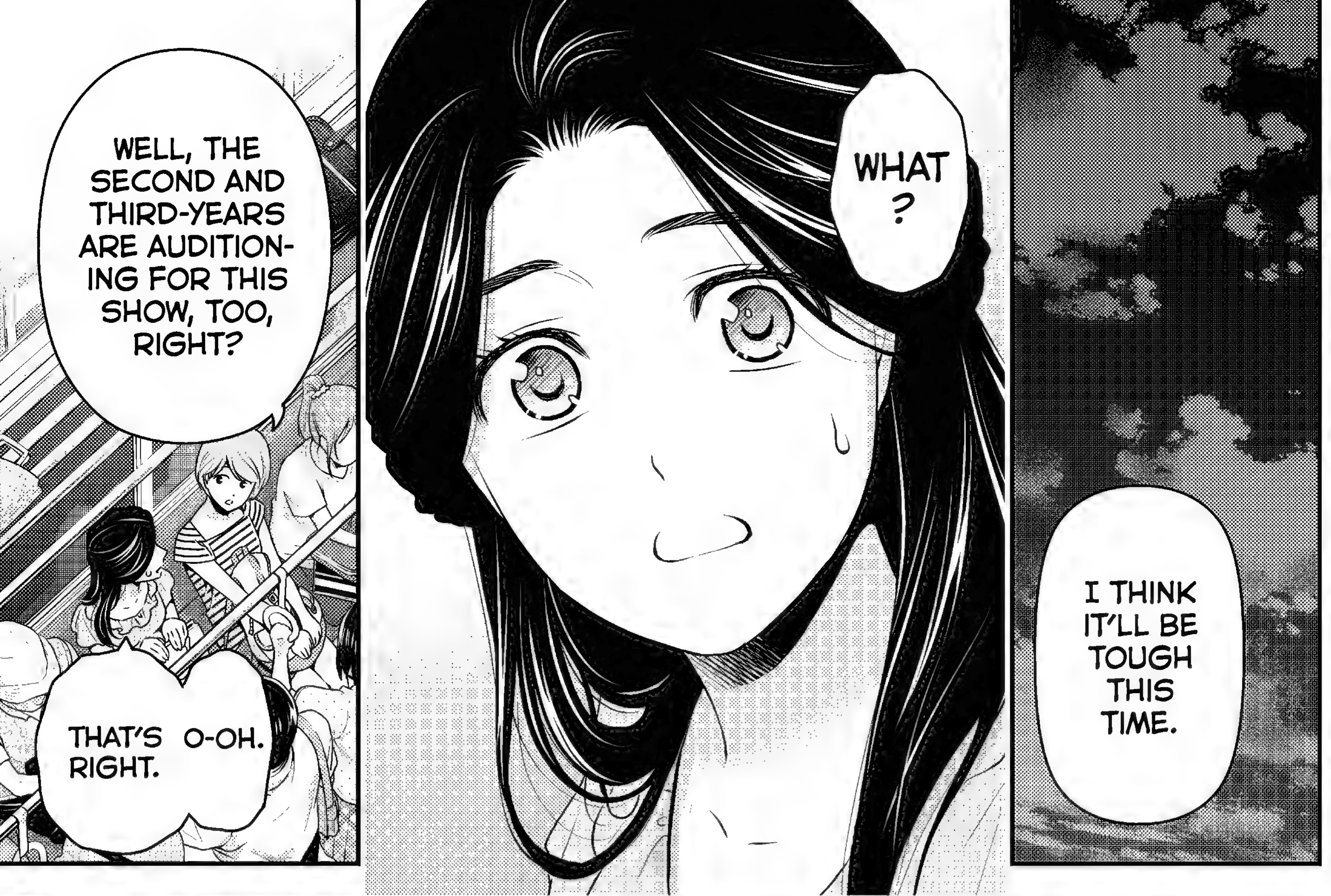
SHE'S A
SUBTLE
SEDUC-
TRESS
...

...WHO
CAN PUT
ANY MAN
UNDER
HER
SPELL.









WHAT?

WELL, THE SECOND AND THIRD-YEARS ARE AUDITIONING FOR THIS SHOW, TOO, RIGHT?

THAT'S RIGHT. O-OH. RIGHT.

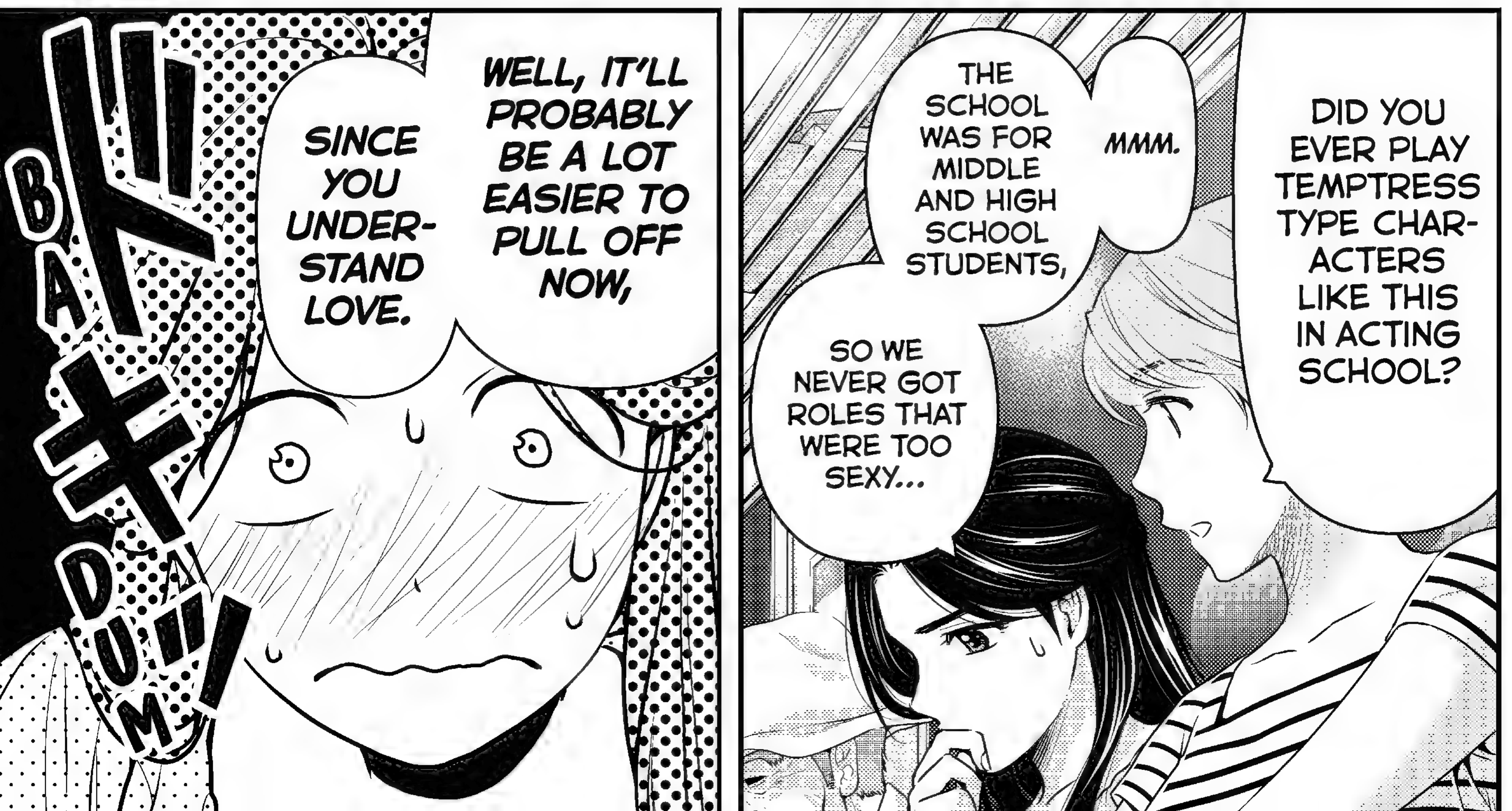
I THINK IT'LL BE TOUGH THIS TIME.



SHE KEPT TALKING ABOUT HOW SHE'S DYING TO PLAY THE ROLE.

ESPECIALLY KUZUOKA-SAN.

THE FIRST-YEARS WERE PRETTY EXCITED, TOO.



SINCE YOU UNDERSTAND LOVE.

WELL, IT'LL PROBABLY BE A LOT EASIER TO PULL OFF NOW,

THE SCHOOL WAS FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS,

SO WE NEVER GOT ROLES THAT WERE TOO SEXY...

MMM.

DID YOU EVER PLAY TEMPTRESS TYPE CHARACTERS LIKE THIS IN ACTING SCHOOL?



I'M KIND OF
SURPRISED
HE WAS
YOUR TYPE,
THOUGH.

...



YOU
DON'T
HAVE TO
DENY IT.

I'VE KNOWN
YOU LONG
ENOUGH TO
PICK UP ON
THAT MUCH.

....!



...I
REALIZED
HE'S
SOMEONE
I CAN
TRUST.

WHILE
WE WERE
WORKING
ON THE
PLAY
TOGETHER
...

WH-
WHAT
ABOUT
HIM?



WHAT DO
YOU FIND
ATTRACTIVE
ABOUT
FUJII-KUN



DID
YOU SAY
SOME-
THING?

HUH
?

JUST
TALKING
TO MY-
SELF.

NO.



...I
CAN'T
JUST
SIT BY,
EITHER.

THEN I
GUESS
...



HMM.



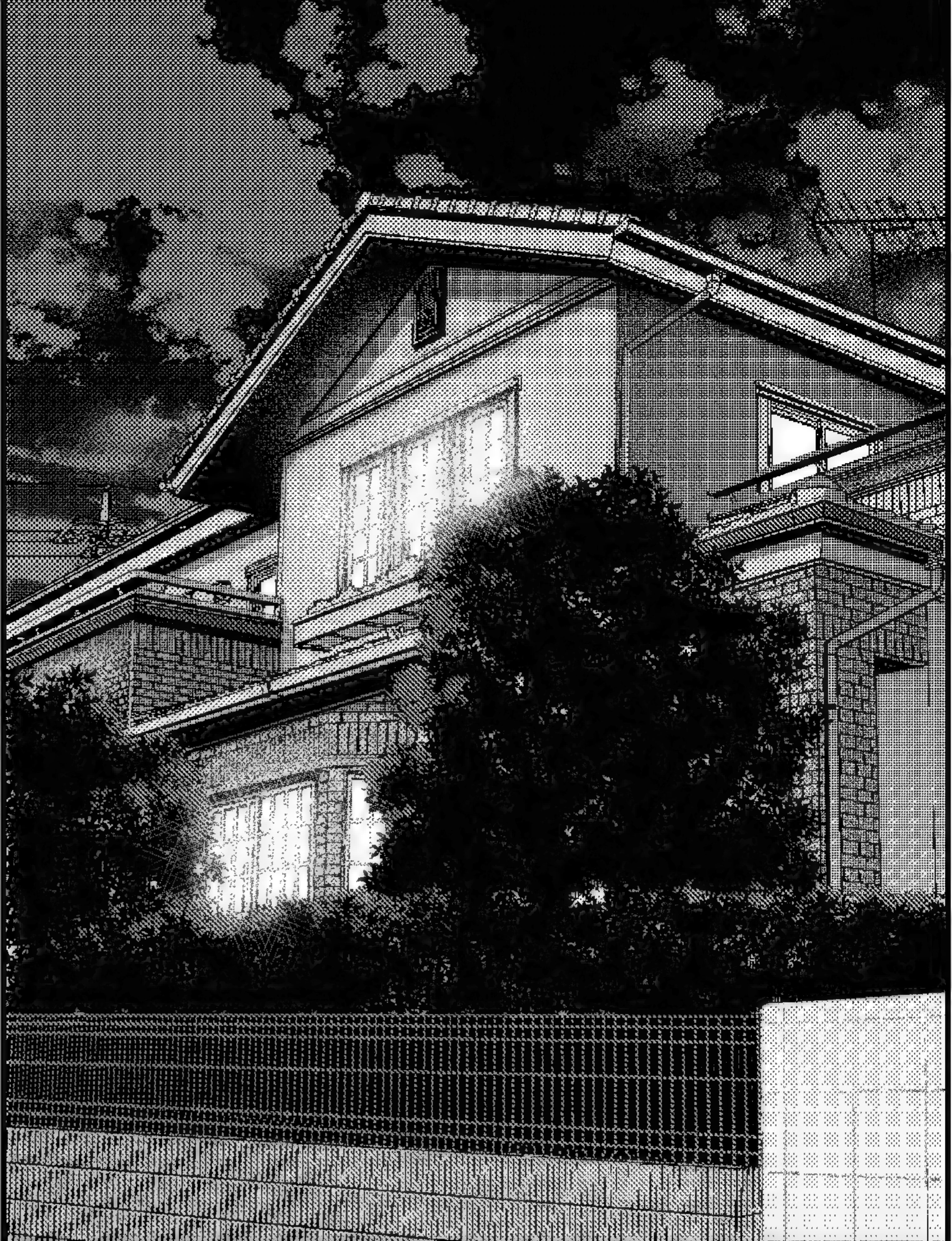
YOU MUST BE TIRED.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY.



NO...

HAVE YOU FOUND A PLACE TO STAY YET?



BOX: LOVE TRAP



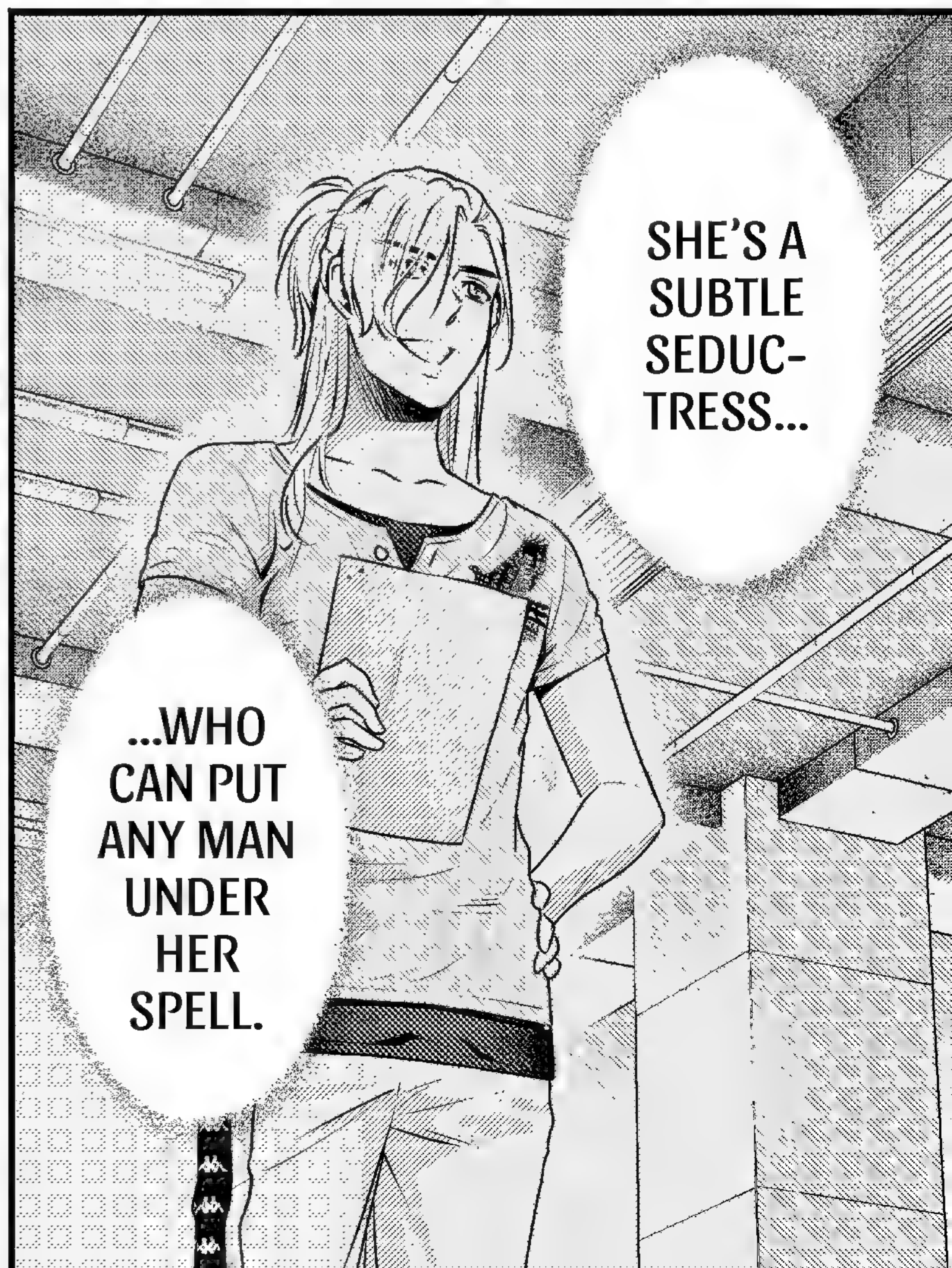
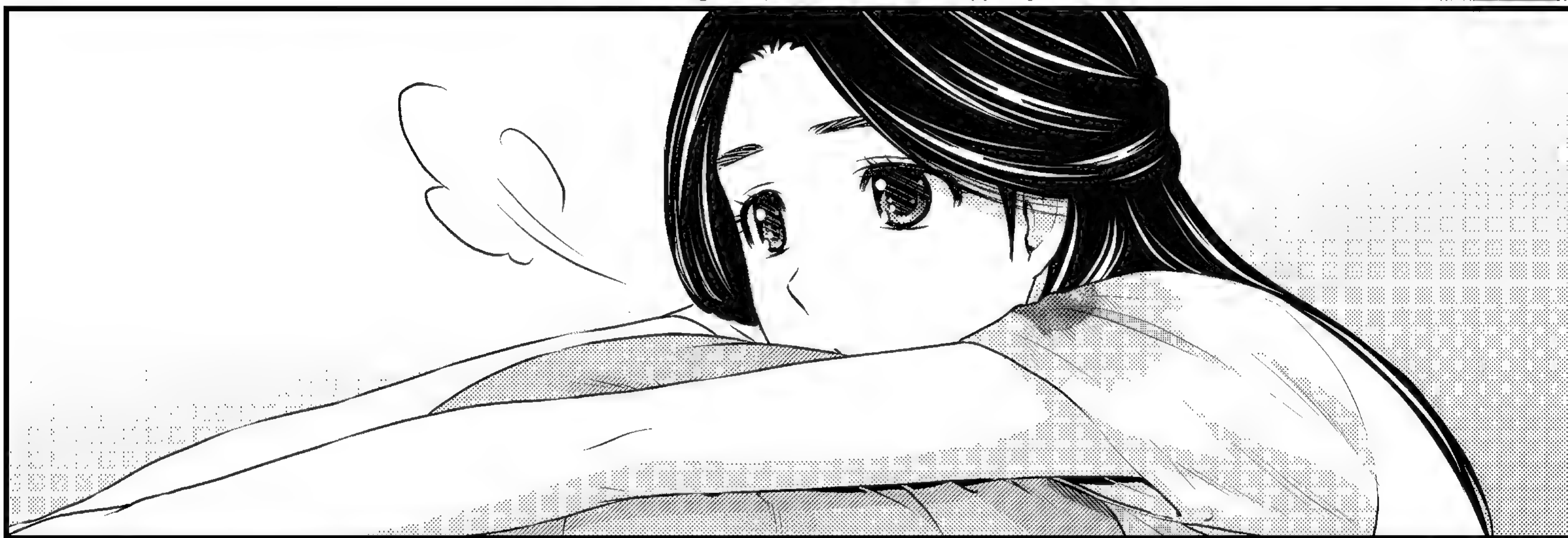
I WOULDN'T MIND IF YOU PAID ME A VISIT LATER.

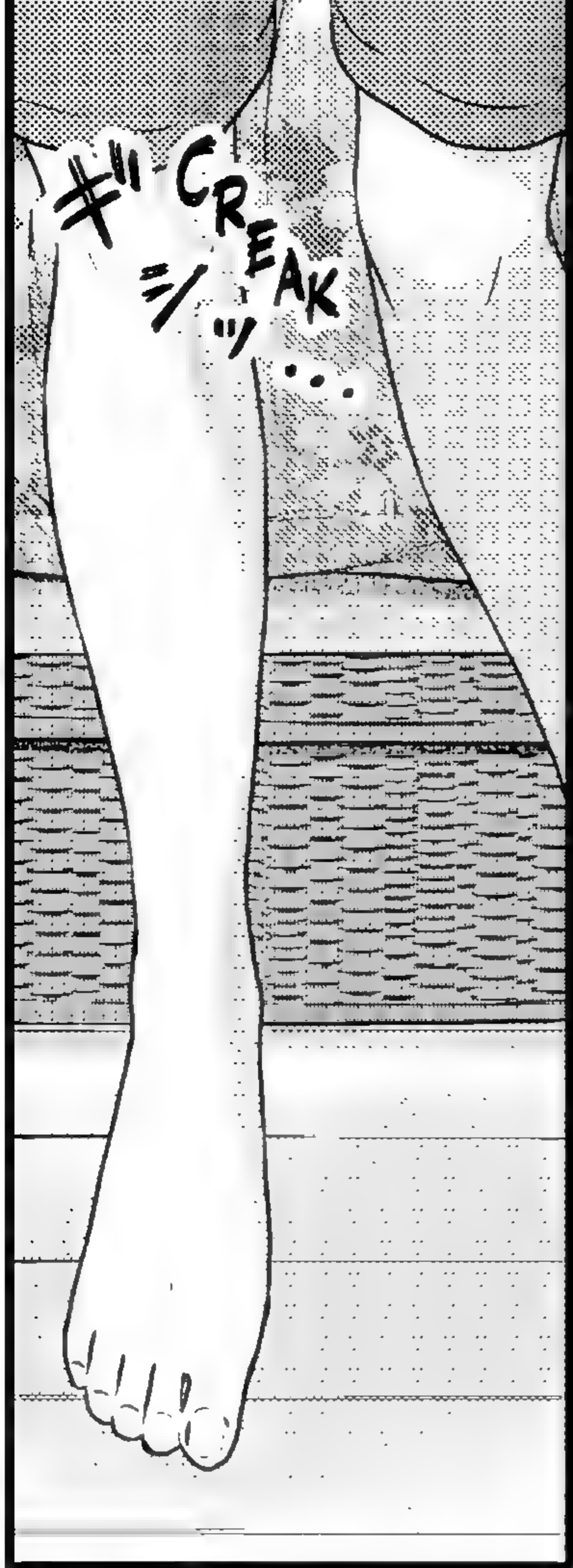
MY ROOM'S UP-STAIRS.



IT'S POURING TONIGHT.

WELL, THAT'S NO GOOD.

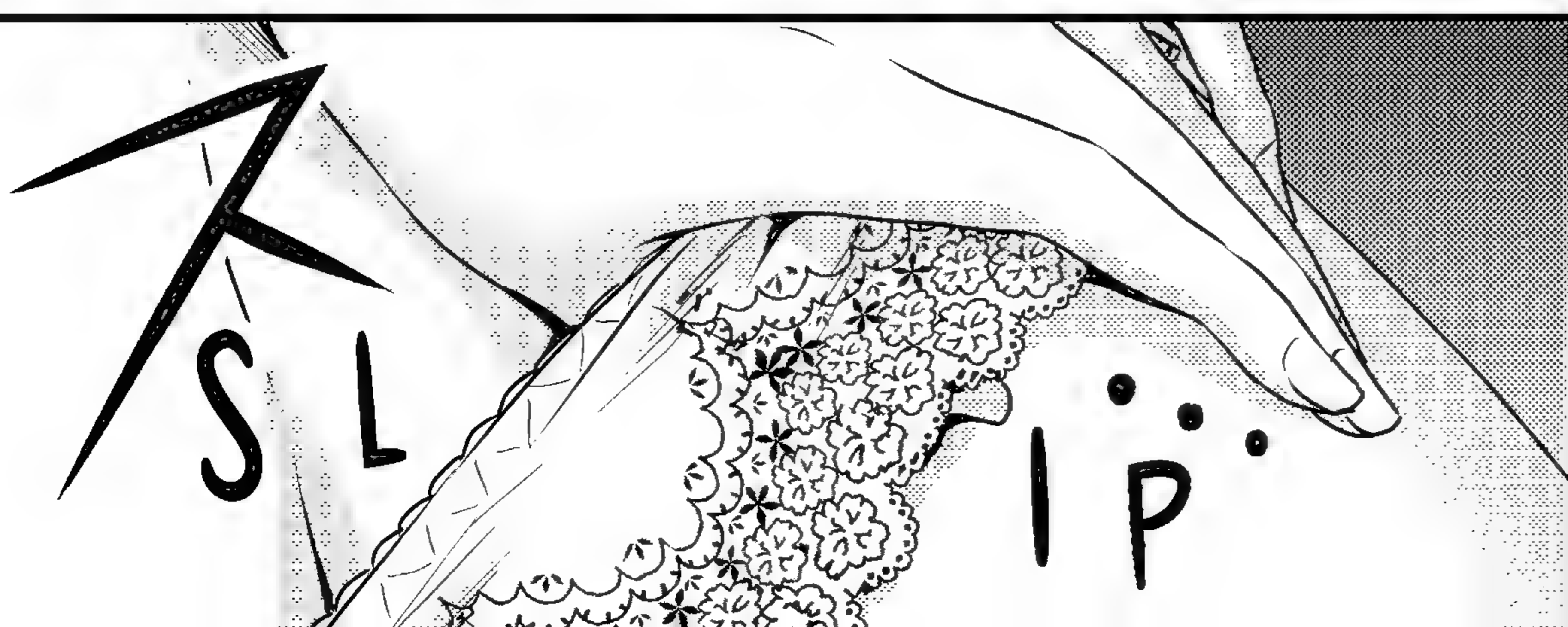








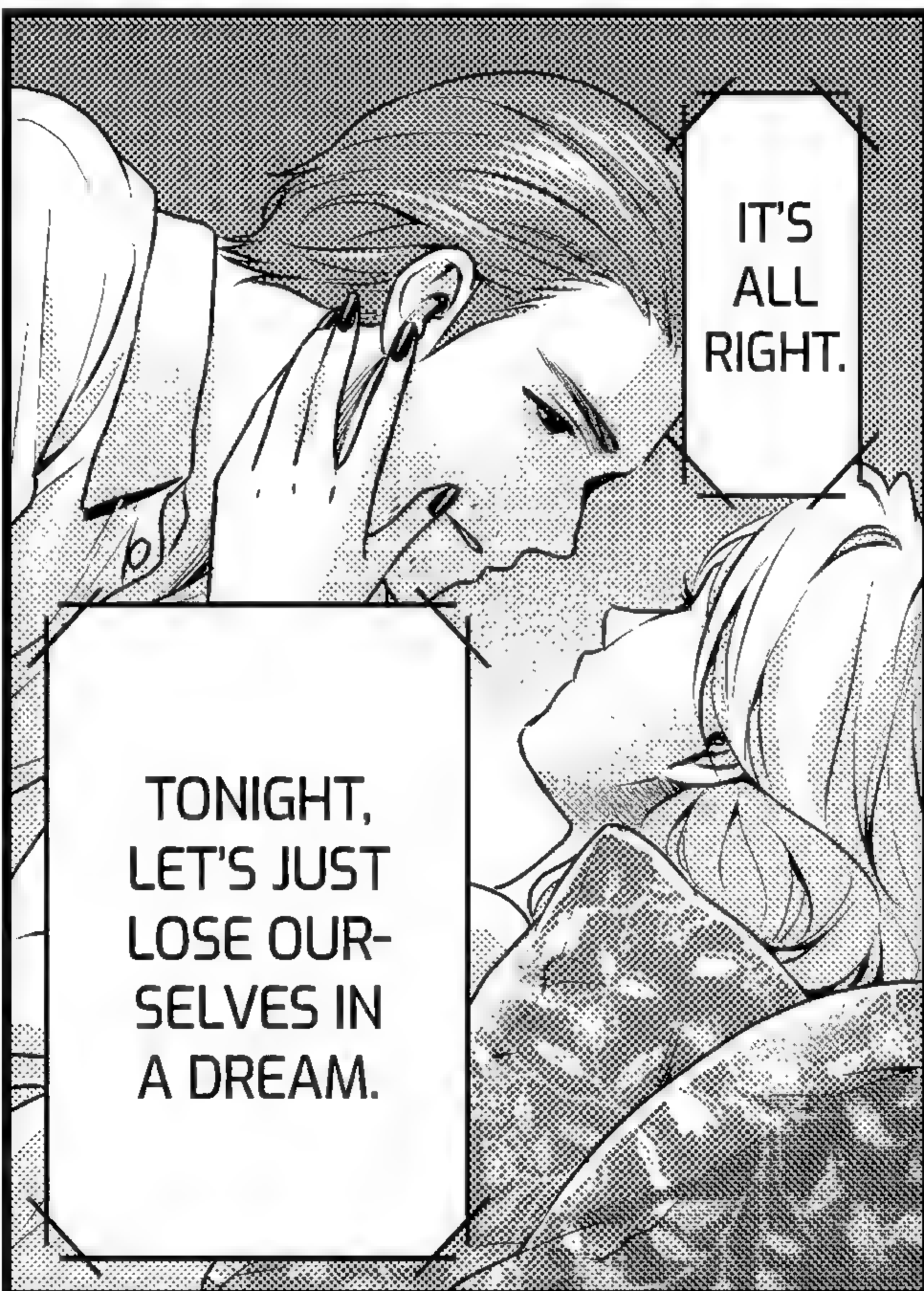
CHAPTER 164: WOES OF YOUTH





IT'S
ALL
RIGHT.

TO-
NIGHT
...



IT'S
ALL
RIGHT.

TONIGHT,
LET'S JUST
LOSE OUR-
SELVES IN
A DREAM.



I KNEW
YOU'D
SHOW.

YOU HAD
SUCH A
LONELY
LOOK IN
YOUR
EYES.

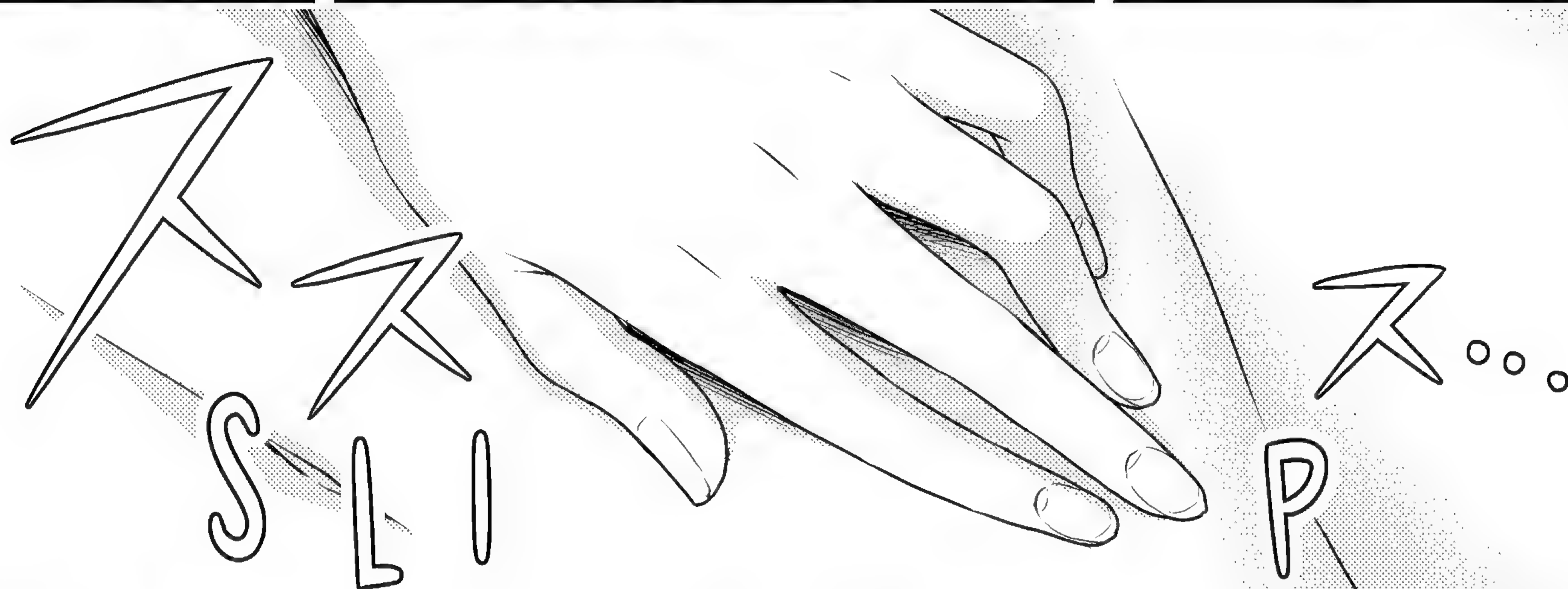
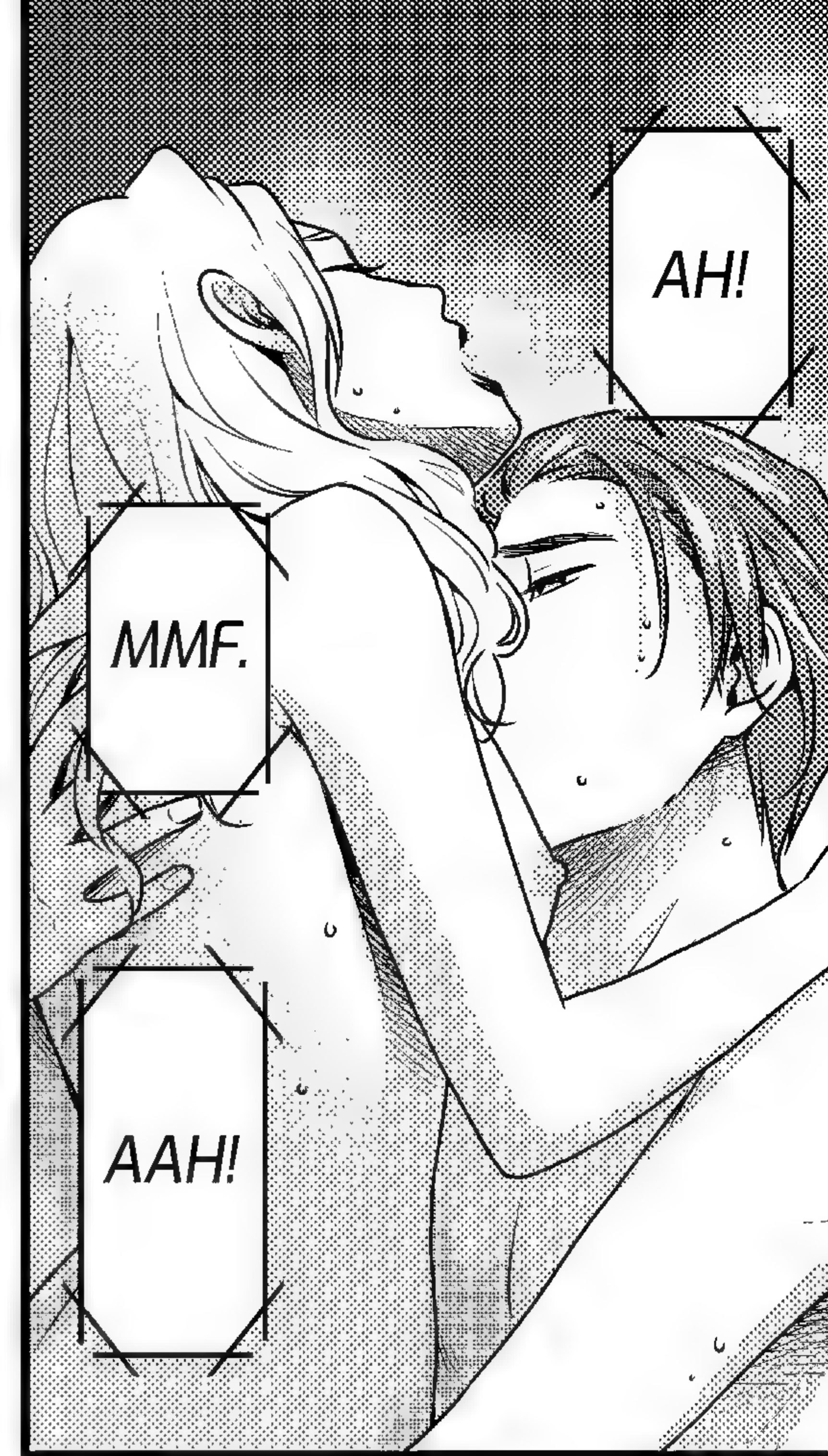


TWITCH GO
G
G



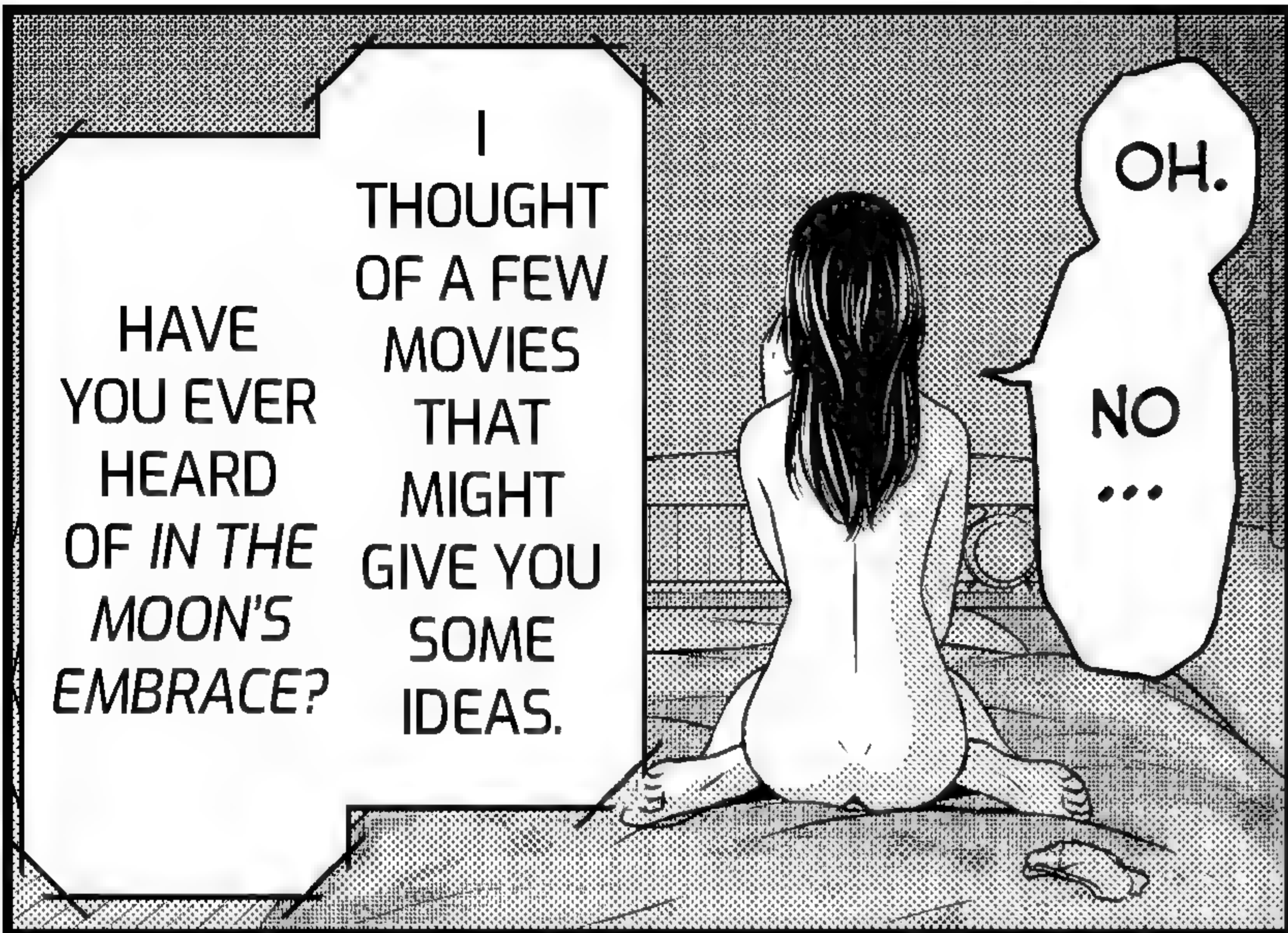
...LET'S
JUST...

...LOSE
OUR-
SELVES
IN A
DREAM.





HELLO?
YUKA?



HAVE
YOU EVER
HEARD
OF IN THE
MOON'S
EMBRACE?

I
THOUGHT
OF A FEW
MOVIES
THAT
MIGHT
GIVE YOU
SOME
IDEAS.

OH.

NO
...



THERE'S
ALSO
LOVE TRAP,
YOUNG
KILLERS,
AND...

I
HAVEN'T.

LET ME
WRITE IT
DOWN.



...SO I
WAS JUST
WONDER-
ING HOW
YOU'RE
DOING.

HEY,
MIYABI.

YOU
SEEMED LIKE
YOU WERE
WORRIED
ABOUT GET-
TING INTO
CHARACTER
TODAY...

ARE
YOU
BUSY
RIGHT
NOW?



BOOP



UH-HUH.
THAT'S
TRUE.

MAY-
BE.

YEAH.

I'LL
GIVE THE
OTHERS
A WATCH.

THANKS.

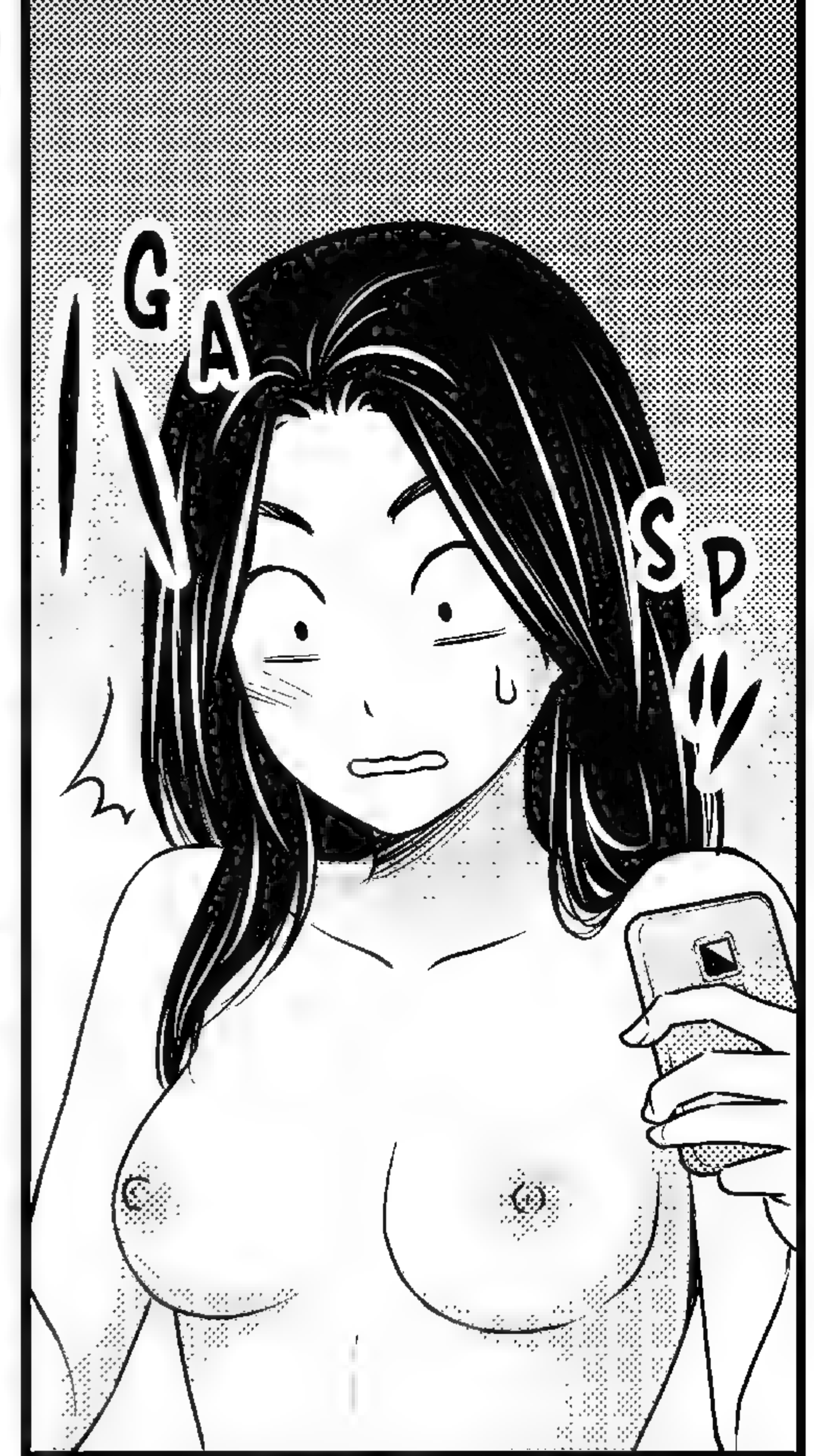


I WAS
JUST
WATCHING
LOVE
TRAP.

REALLY?
THAT
MIGHT
BE THE
CLOSEST
TO THE
ROLE.



I...
I SHOULD
PUT
SOME
CLOTHES
ON.



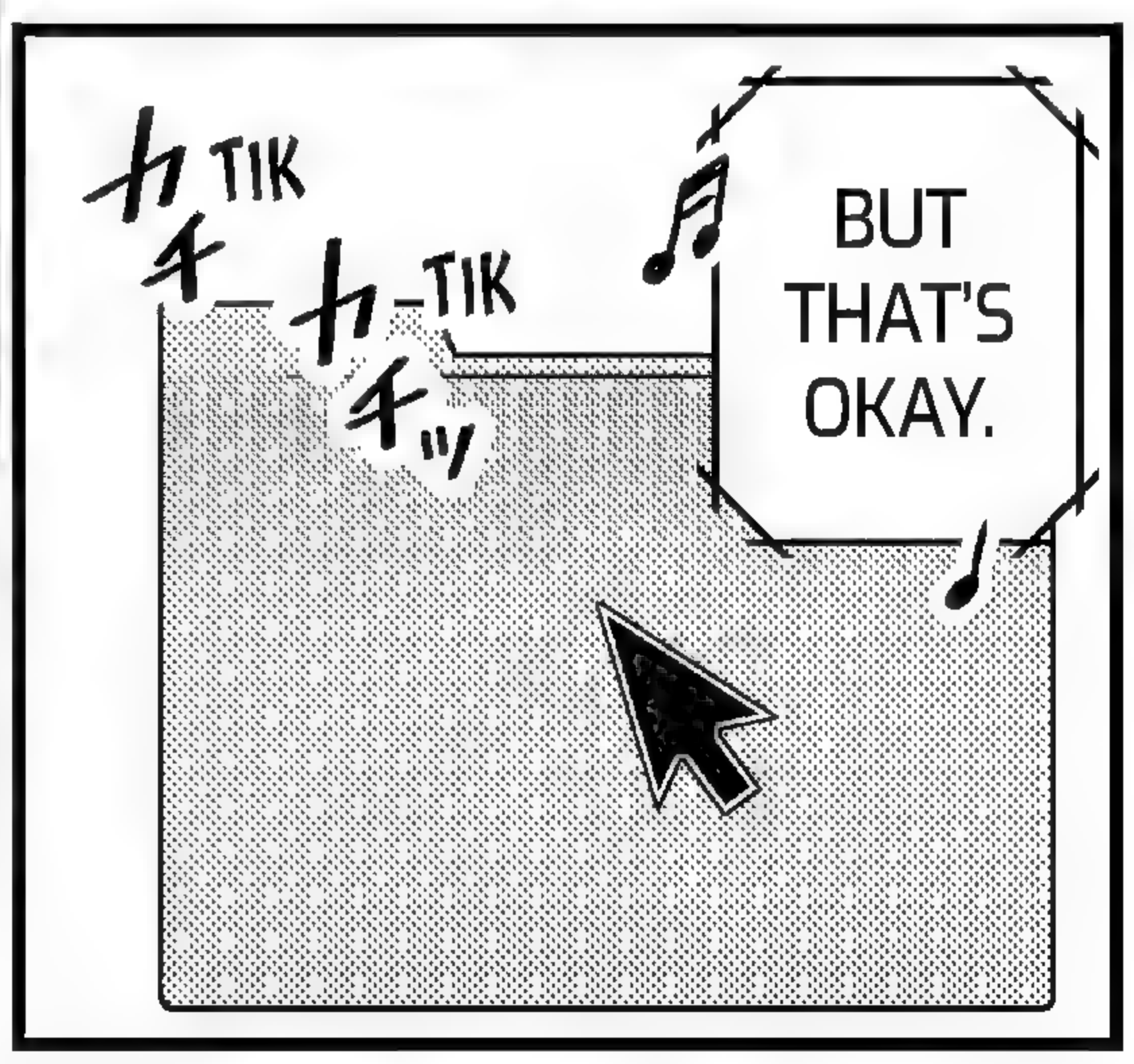
GROUP

MY LOVE
FOR YOU IS
ALL I NEED.

ALL I
NEED.



NO ONE
KNOWS
HOW I
FEEL.



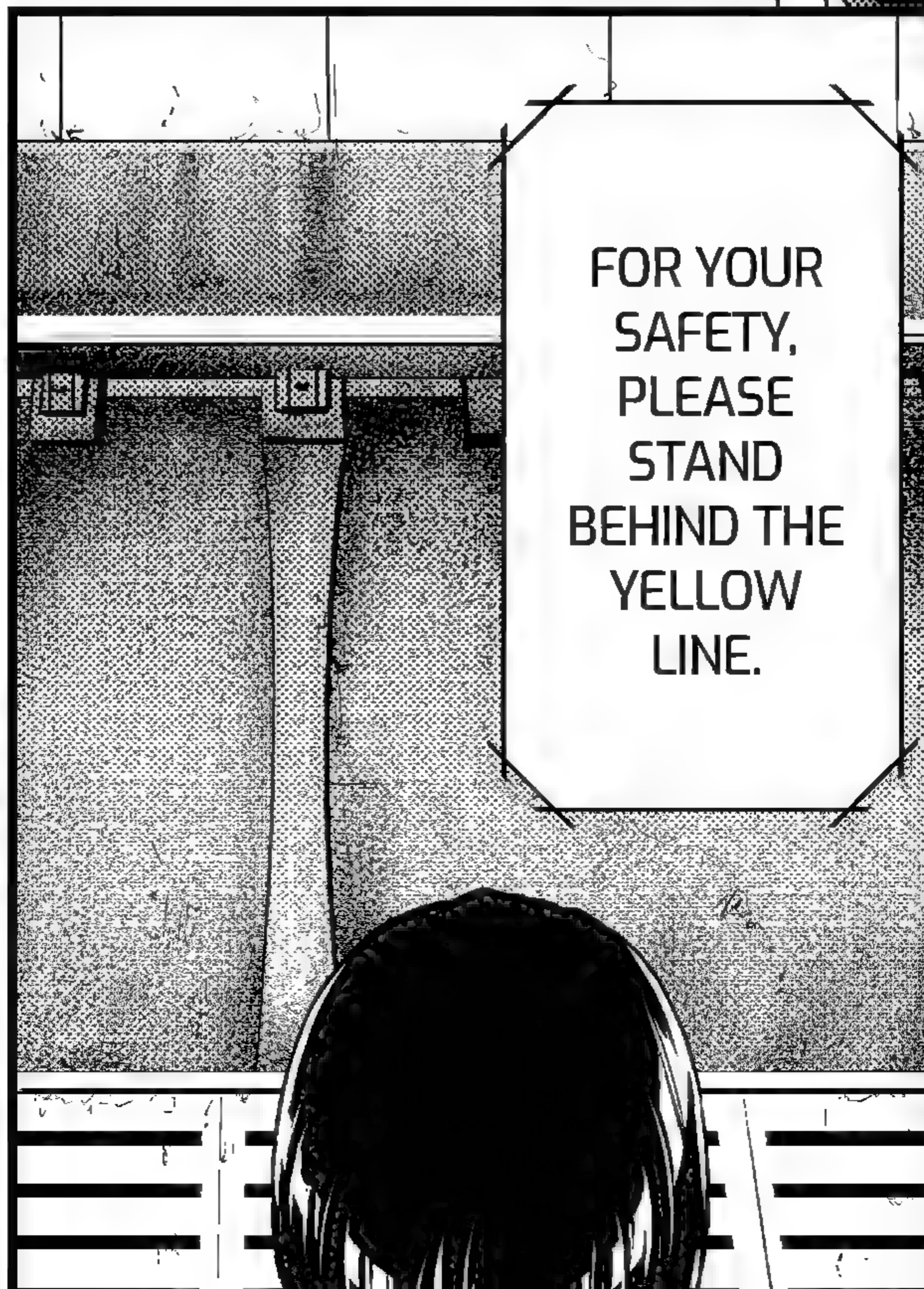
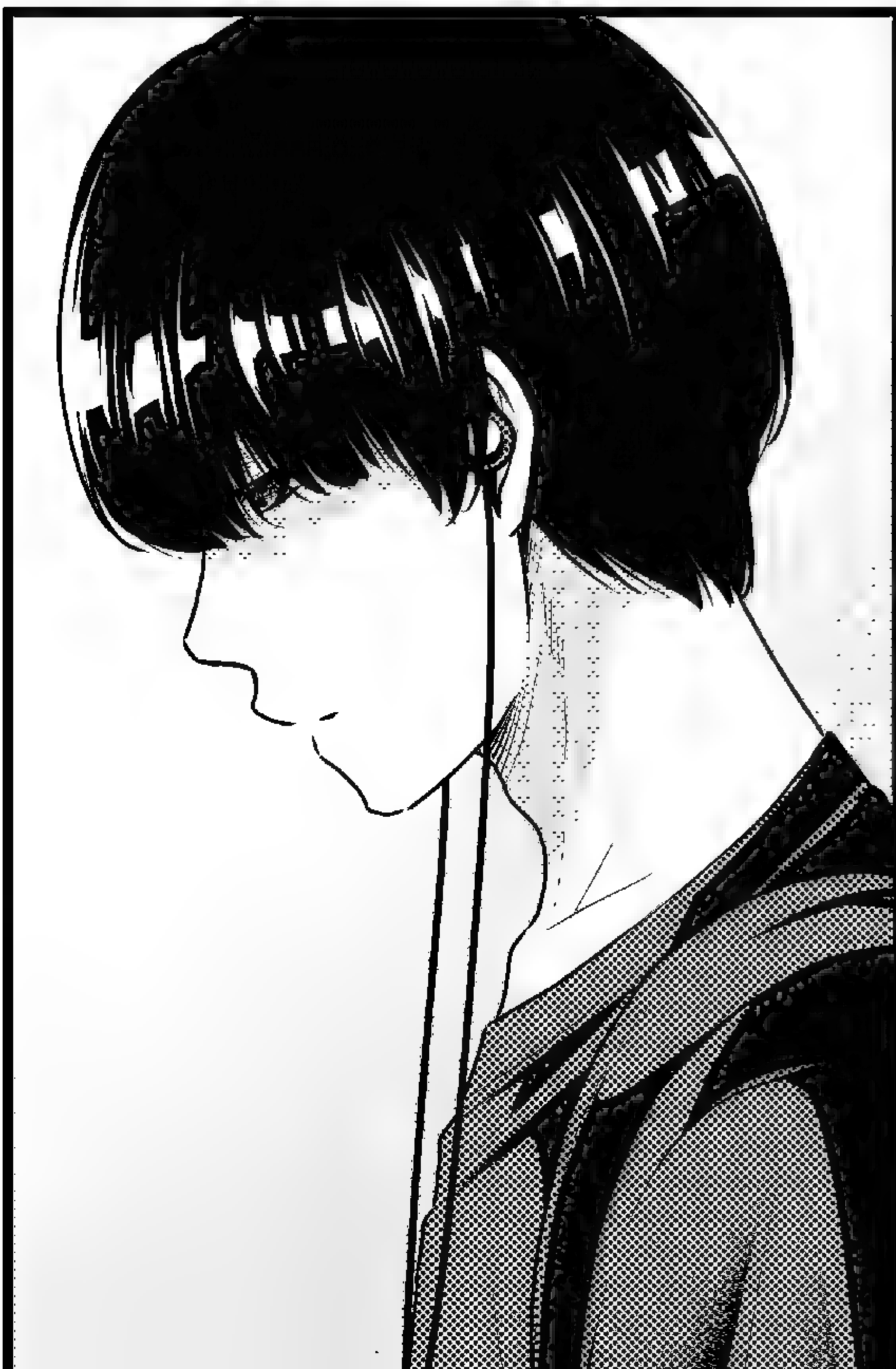
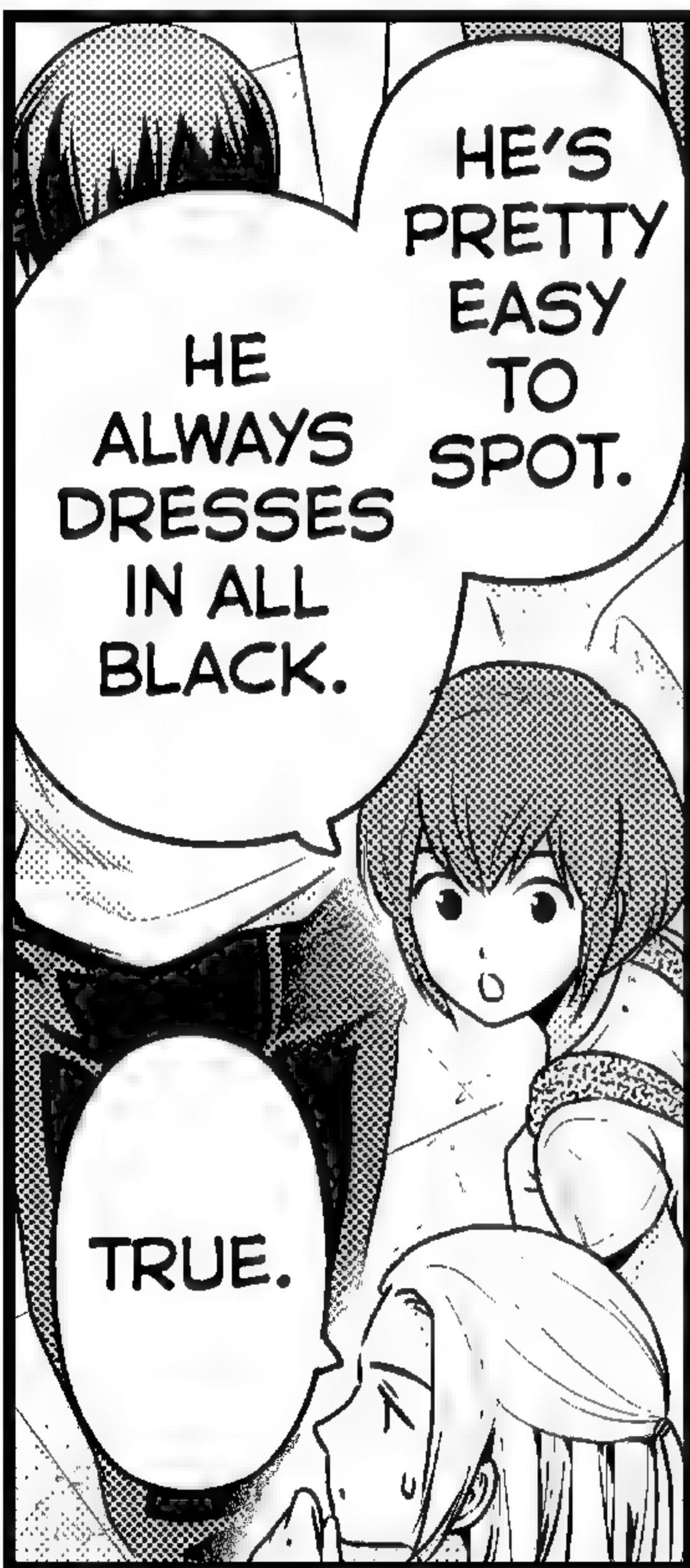
TIK
TIK
TIK

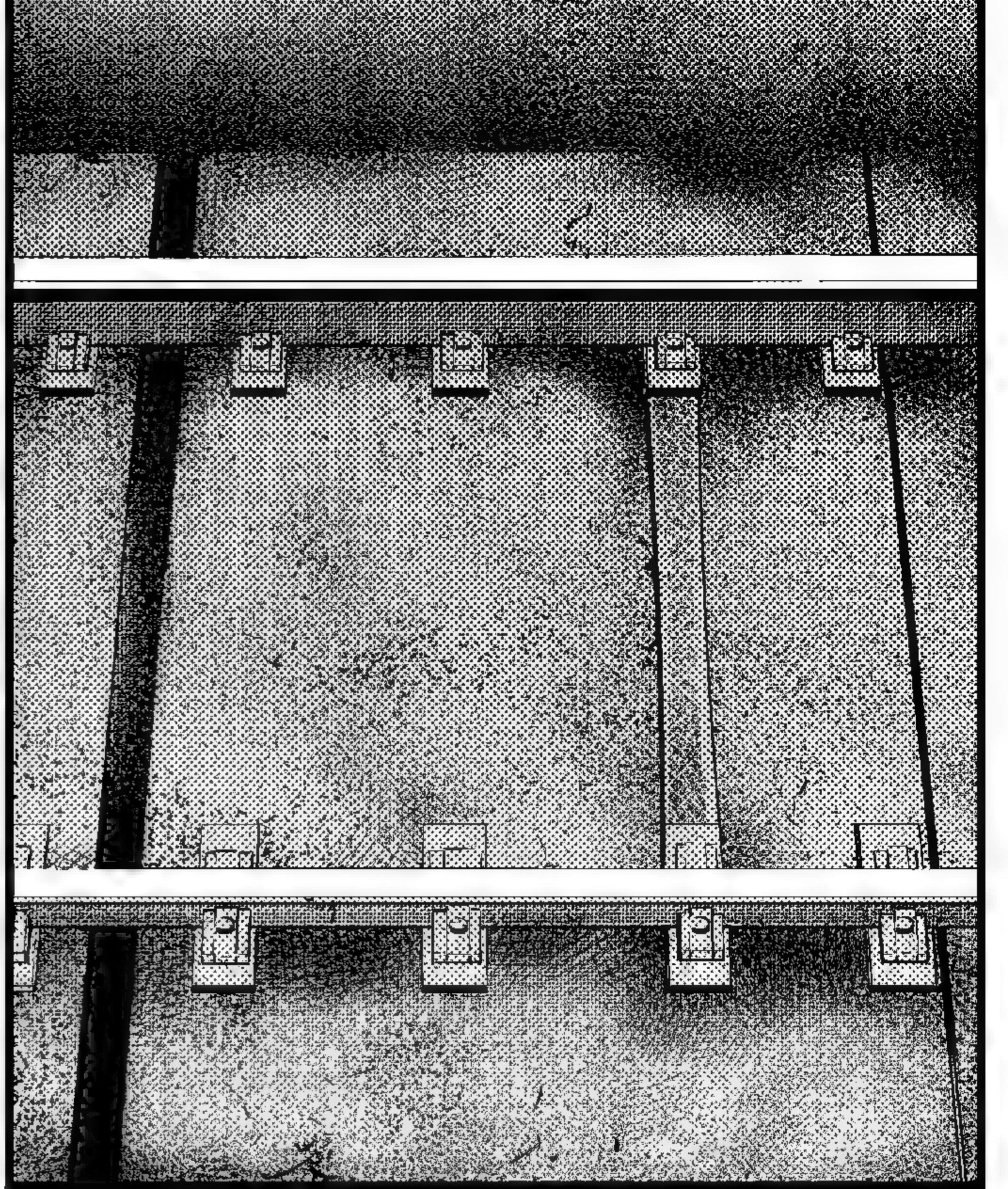
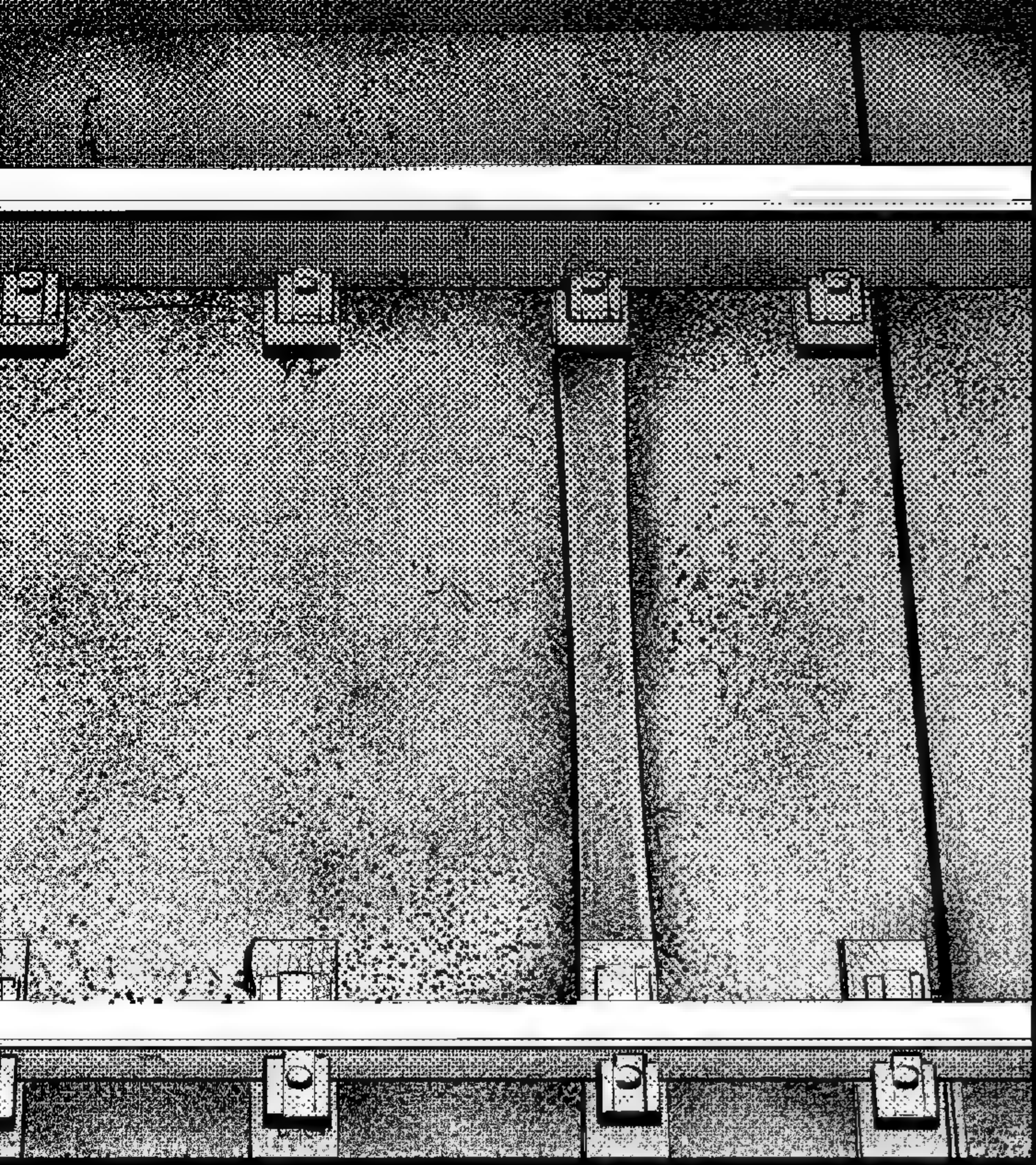
BUT
THAT'S
OKAY.



...STEAL
YOUR SMILE
FROM ME.

I WON'T
LET HER...





RYU ...

I PRETTY MUCH HAVE TO DRAG MYSELF OUT OF BED.

MORNING LECTURES SUCK, HUH?



MORNING, YUJI.

YOU HAVE CLASS THIS MORNING, TOO?



YO!



NOT YOU.



NOT ME.

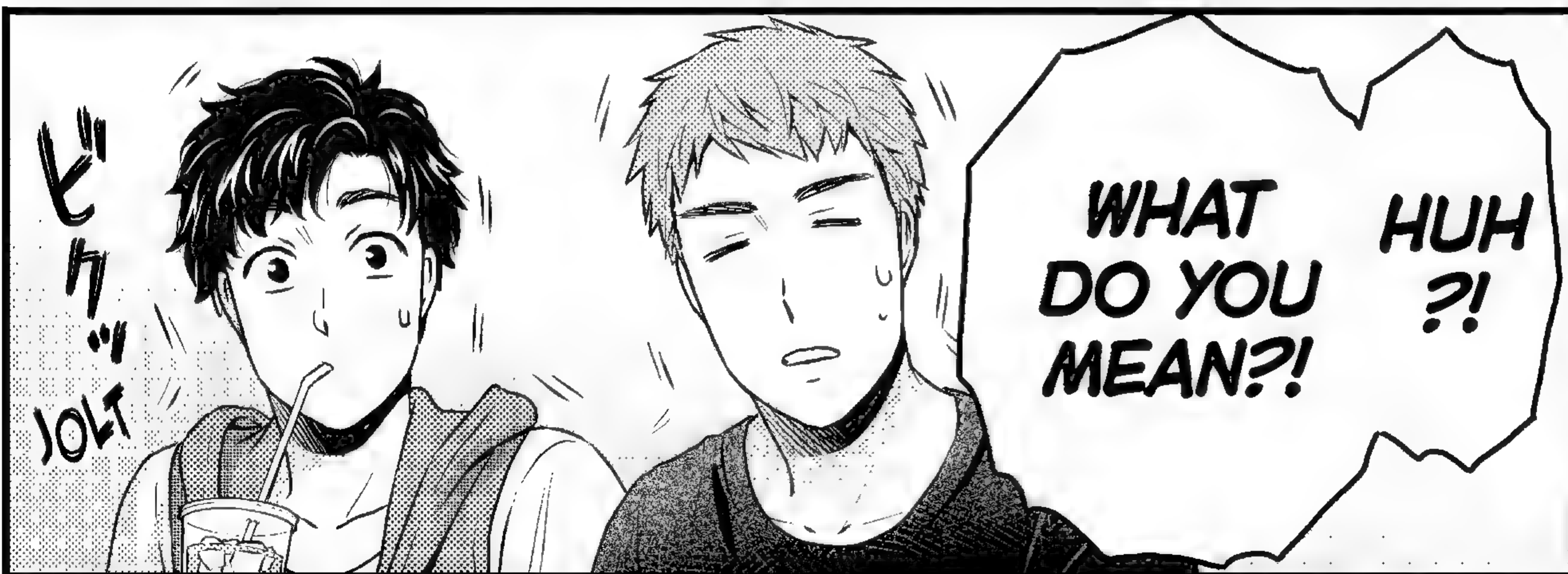
NO ONE WANTS THAT, YUJI.



...



I KNOW.
SORRY ...



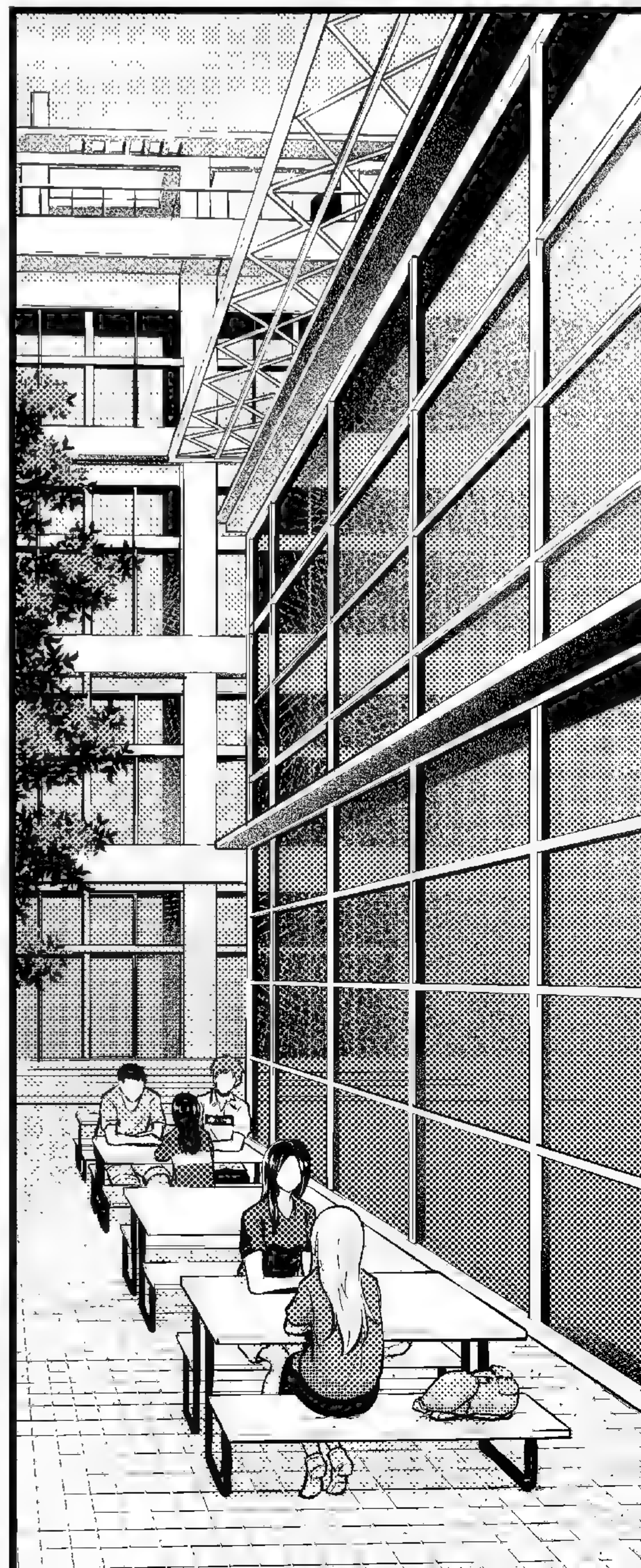
ビクッ
JOLT

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
HUH ?!



DIDN'T YOU SAY THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF LIKED IT?!

MY STORY WON'T MAKE IT IN?!
WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?!





I CAN TRY TO
FIT IT IN IF ONE
OF THE OTHER
AUTHORS
MISSES THEIR
DEADLINE,
BUT...

AND
LOOKING AT
THE LINEUP,
EVERY ISSUE'S
GONNA BE
FULL FOR
A WHILE.



THEY WANT
TO DO A
FEATURE
ON HER.

I'M SORRY...
PEOPLE
AROUND THE
OFFICE HAVE
BEEN TALKING
ABOUT
AZAMINA'S
BOOK SINCE
BEFORE IT
WENT ON
SALE.



HUH
?

MY SHORT
STORY THEY
WERE GOING
TO PUBLISH
GOT CUT...

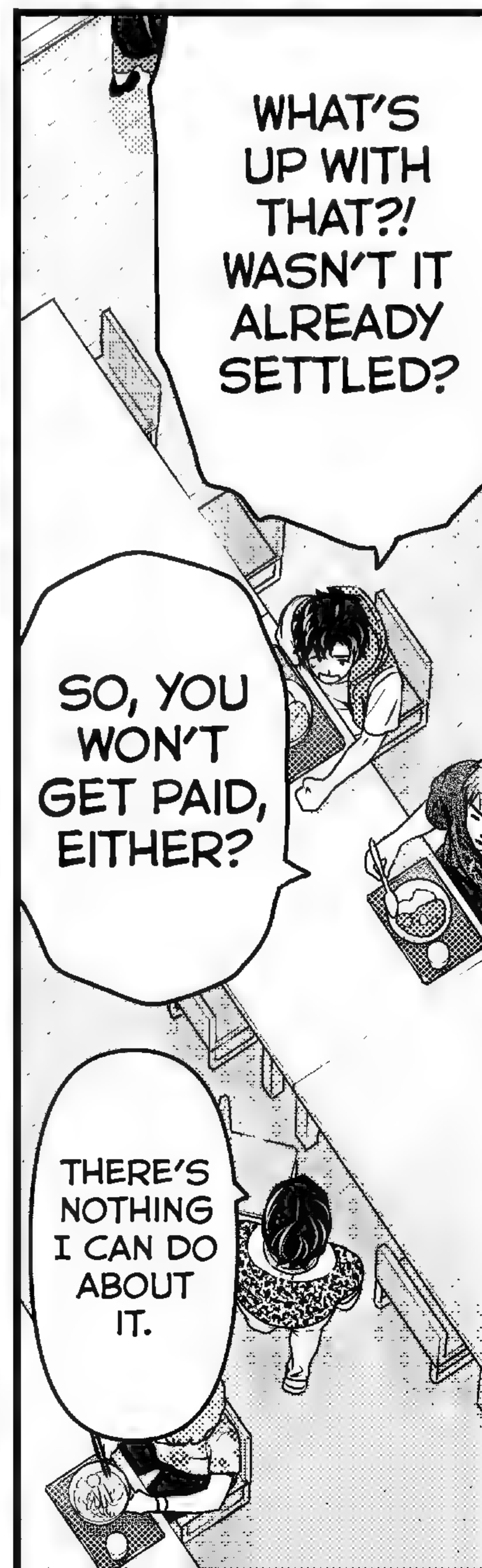


WHAT'S
WRONG?
BAD
NEWS?



ALL
THIS
MEANS
IS...

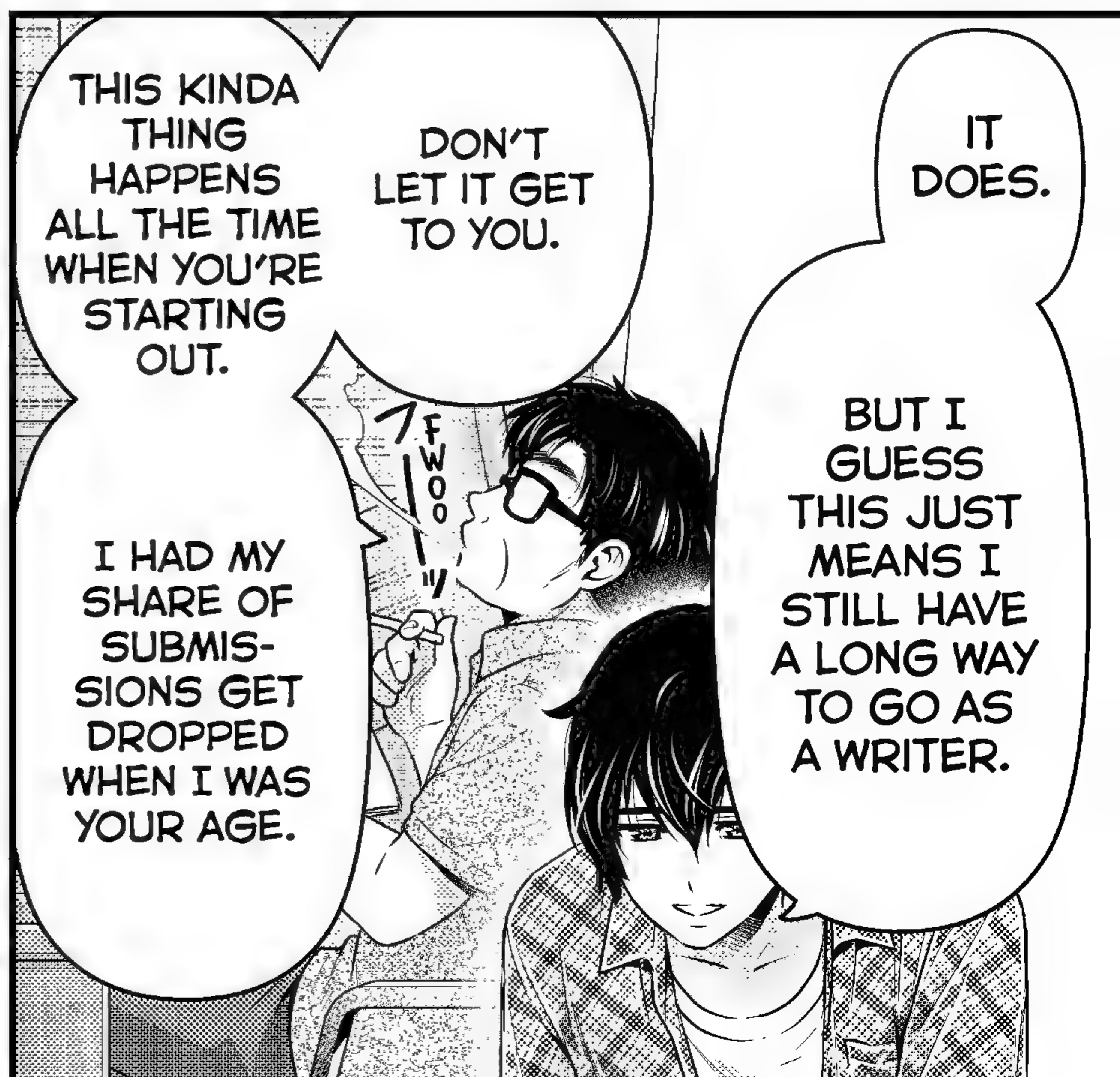
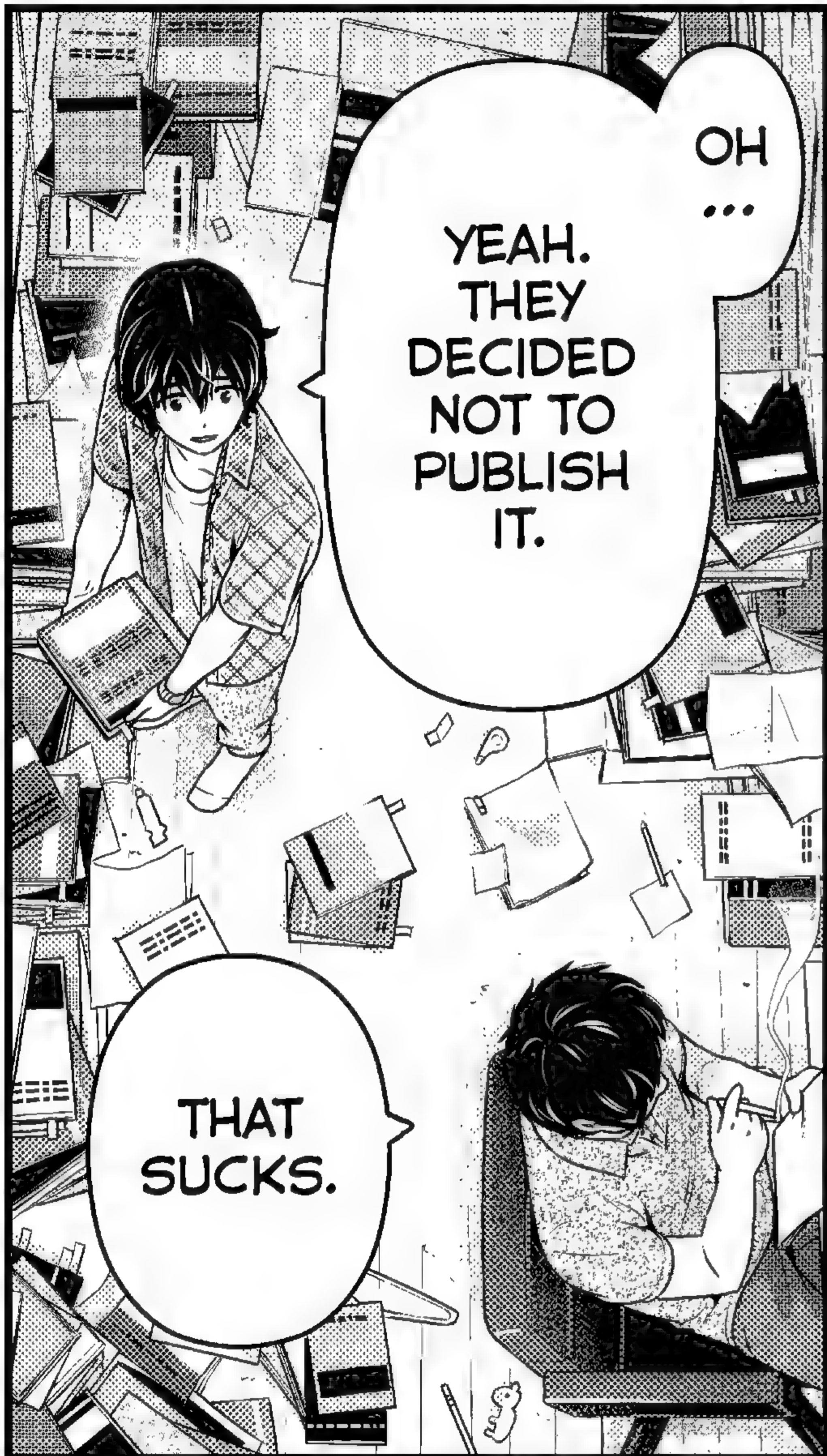
...I
WASN'T
GOOD
ENOUGH.



WHAT'S
UP WITH
THAT?!
WASN'T IT
ALREADY
SETTLED?

SO, YOU
WON'T
GET PAID,
EITHER?

THERE'S
NOTHING
I CAN DO
ABOUT
IT.





THINGS
WOULD BE
MUCH SIMPLER
IF WE COULD
JUST COMMIT
TO ONE OR
THE OTHER.

"WRITE
FOR
SALES,
OR WRITE
FOR THE
SOUL?"

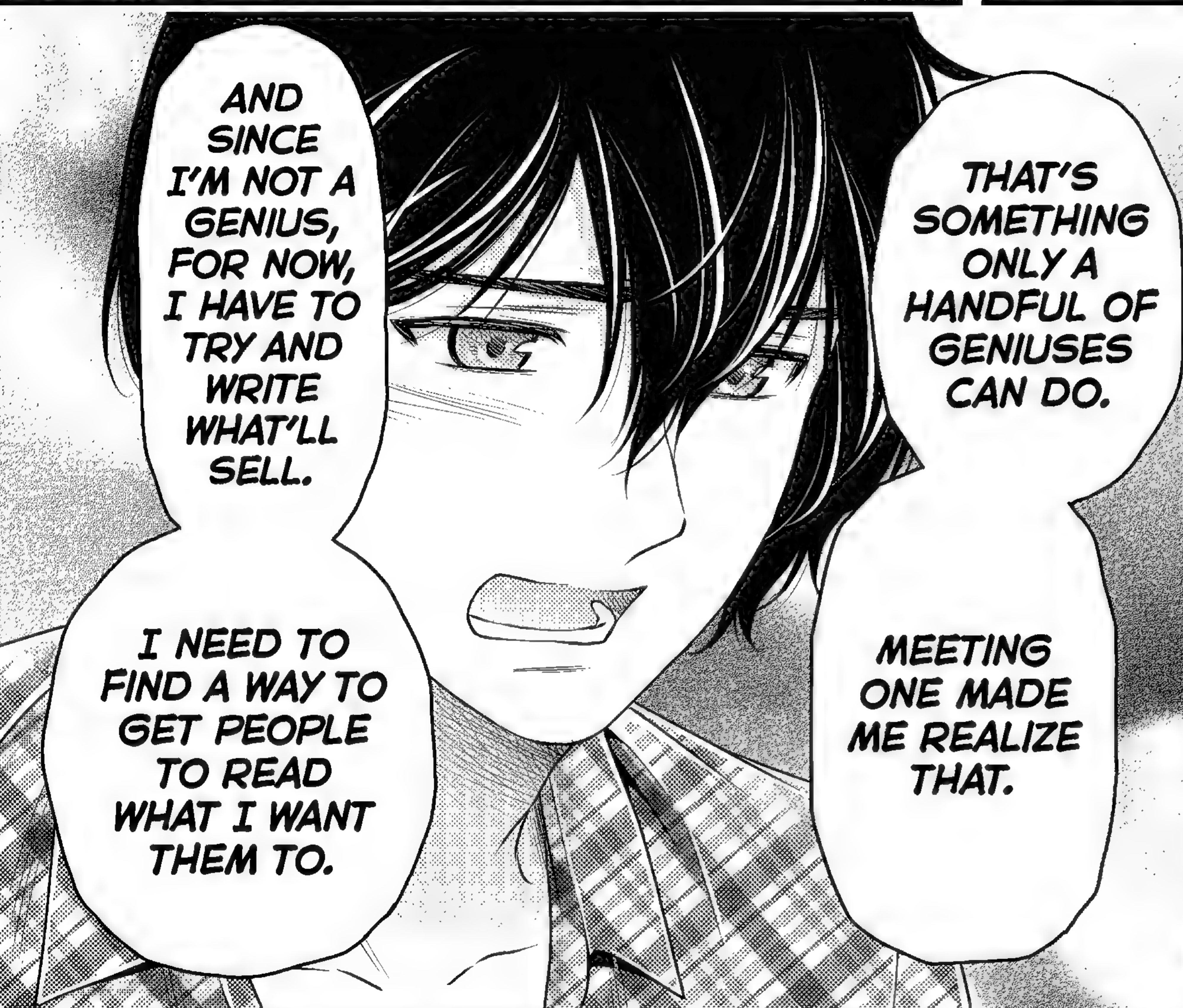
IT'S
SOME-
THIN'
THAT
COMES
UP ALL
THE
TIME.



I COULD
SEE IT
GETTING
ADAPTED
INTO A
TV SHOW
EASILY.

WHEN I
READ IT, I
THOUGHT,
"MAN,
THIS WILL
PROBABLY
SELL LIKE
CRAZY."

...



AND
SINCE
I'M NOT A
GENIUS,
FOR NOW,
I HAVE TO
TRY AND
WRITE
WHAT'LL
SELL.

THAT'S
SOMETHING
ONLY A
HANDFUL OF
GENIUSES
CAN DO.

I NEED TO
FIND A WAY TO
GET PEOPLE
TO READ
WHAT I WANT
THEM TO.

MEETING
ONE MADE
ME REALIZE
THAT.



IDEALLY
YOU
WANNA
FIND A
NICE
MIX OF
BOTH,

BUT NOT
MANY
WRITERS
CAN MAN-
AGE THAT
FROM DAY
ONE...

I
KNOW.

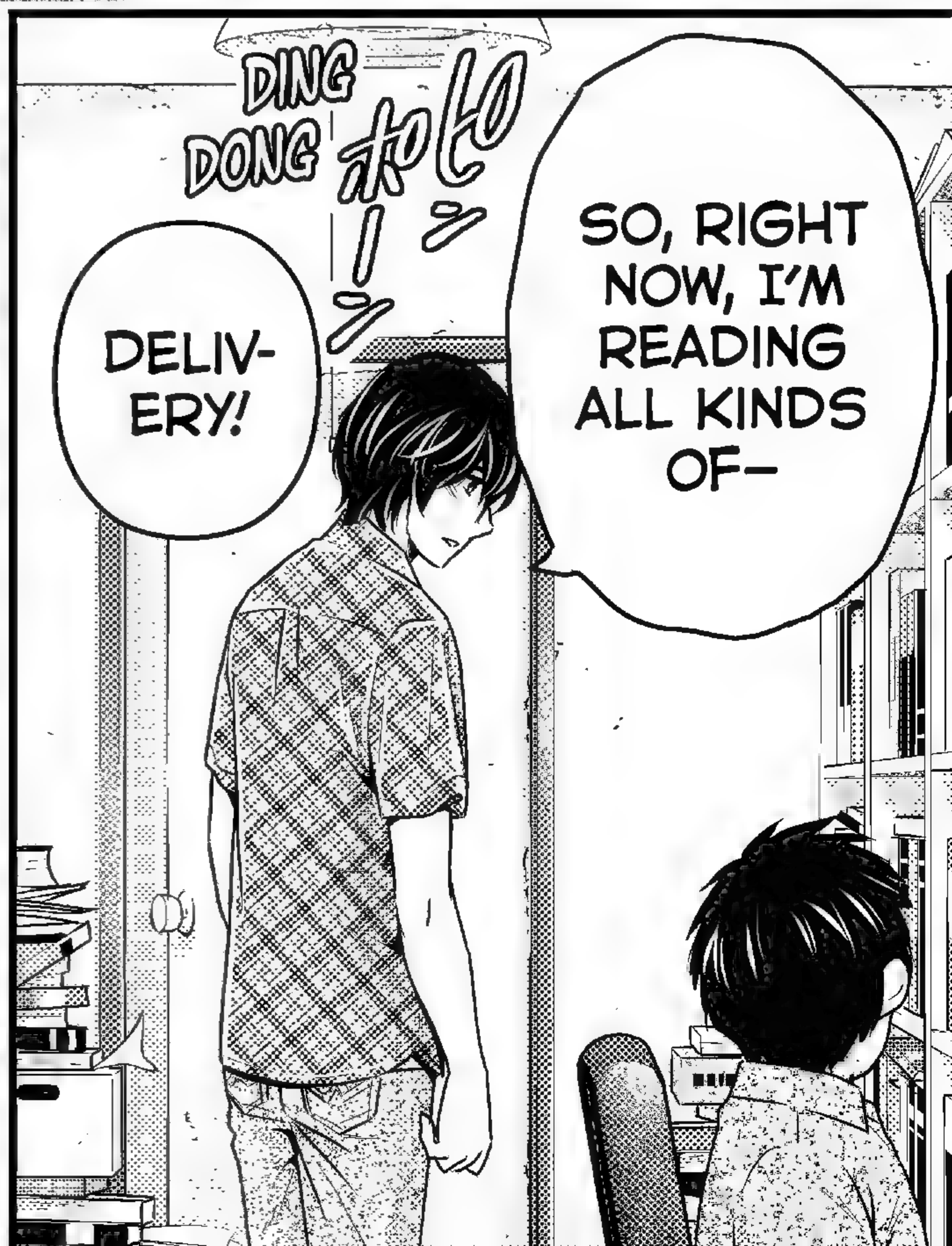
BOOK: RUT



BE
RIGHT
THERE!

1/4
1/4 TMP

1/4
1/4 TMP

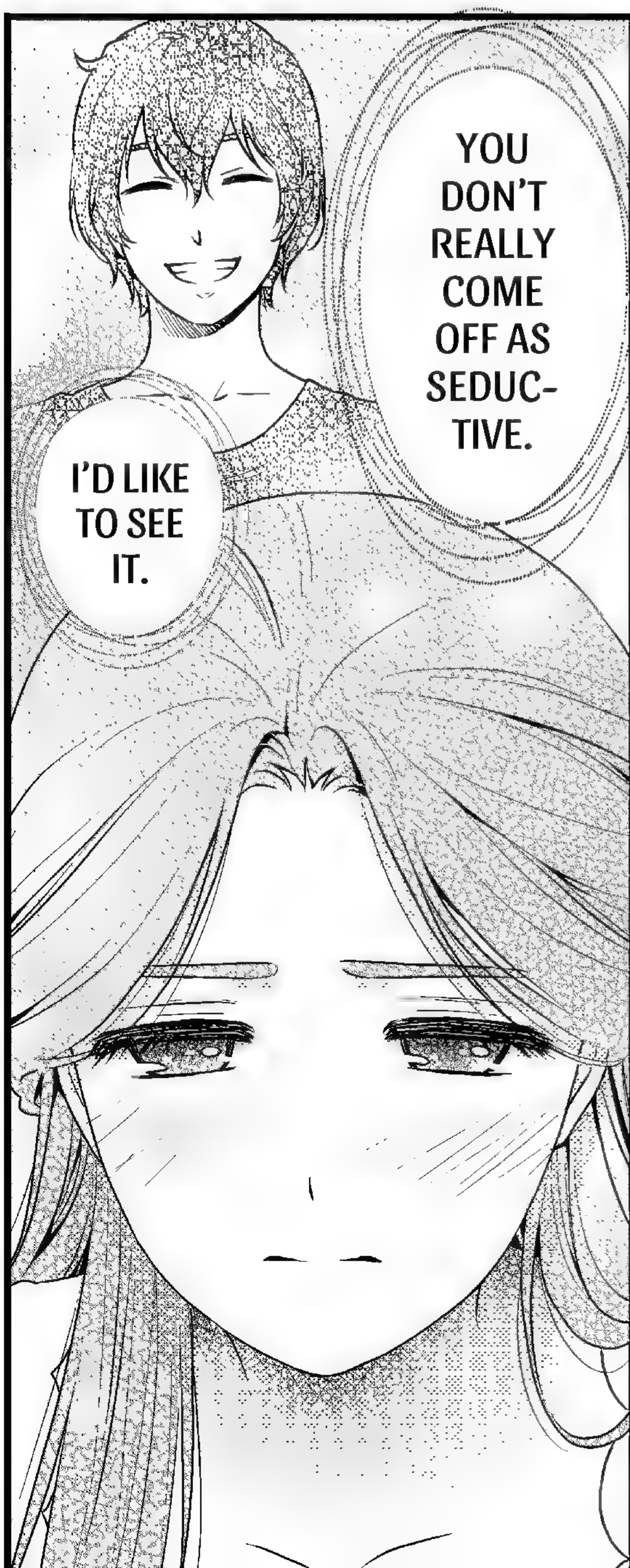


DELIV-
ERY!

SO, RIGHT
NOW, I'M
READING
ALL KINDS
OF-

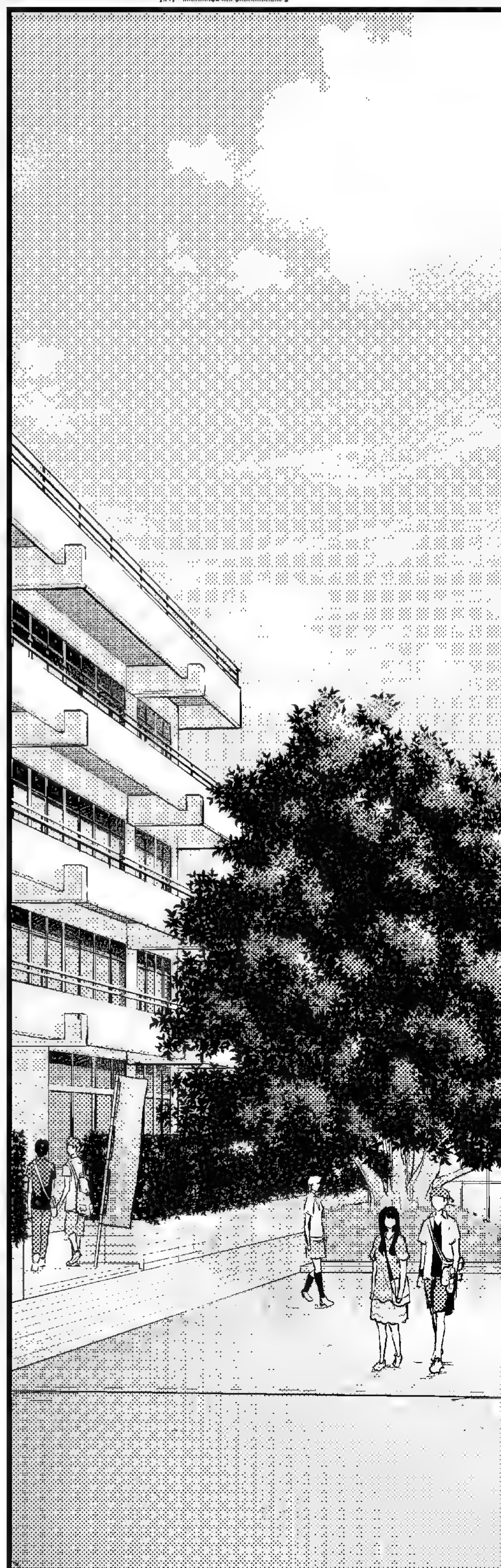
...IF WE
DIDN'T
COMPARE
OUR-
SELVES TO
OTHERS.

LIFE WOULD
BE SO MUCH
EASIER...



YOU
DON'T
REALLY
COME
OFF AS
SEDUC-
TIVE.

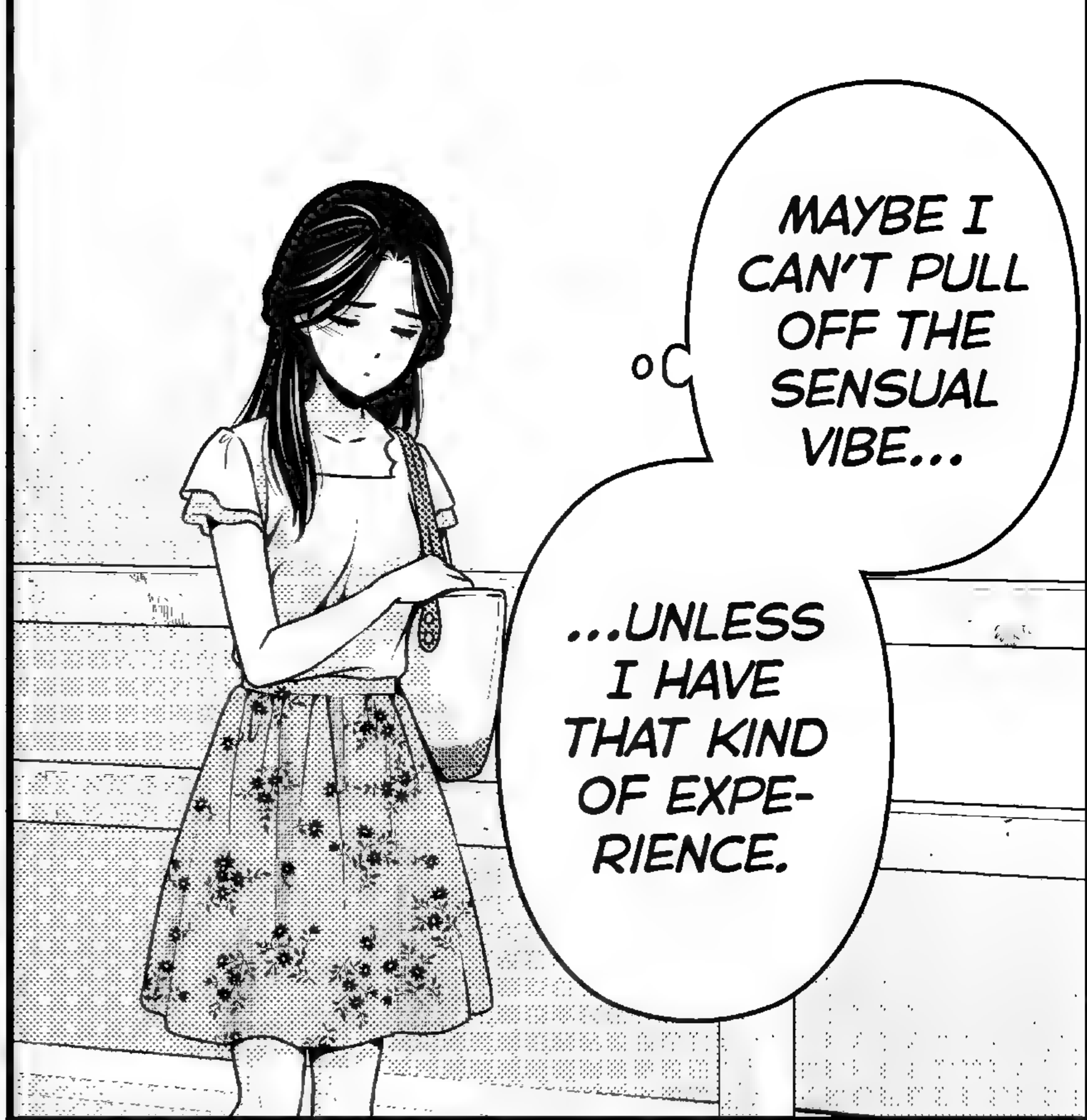
I'D LIKE
TO SEE
IT.





SERIZAWA-SAN? DON'T COUNT ON IT.

BUT IF THAT WERE TRUE, THEN HOW WOULD PEOPLE PLAY MURDERERS AND STUFF LIKE THAT?



MAYBE I CAN'T PULL OFF THE SENSUAL VIBE...

...UNLESS I HAVE THAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE.



...BUT SHE'S KIND OF UPTIGHT, DON'T YOU THINK?

I MEAN, SHE'S PRETTY AND ALL ...



THERE'S NO WAY SERIZAWA-SAN WILL LAND THE LEADING ROLE THIS TIME.

...



UNLESS SHE'S HAD A TASTE OF THAT PLEASURE ...

NO MATTER HOW GOOD HER ACTING IS,



YOU CAN TELL?

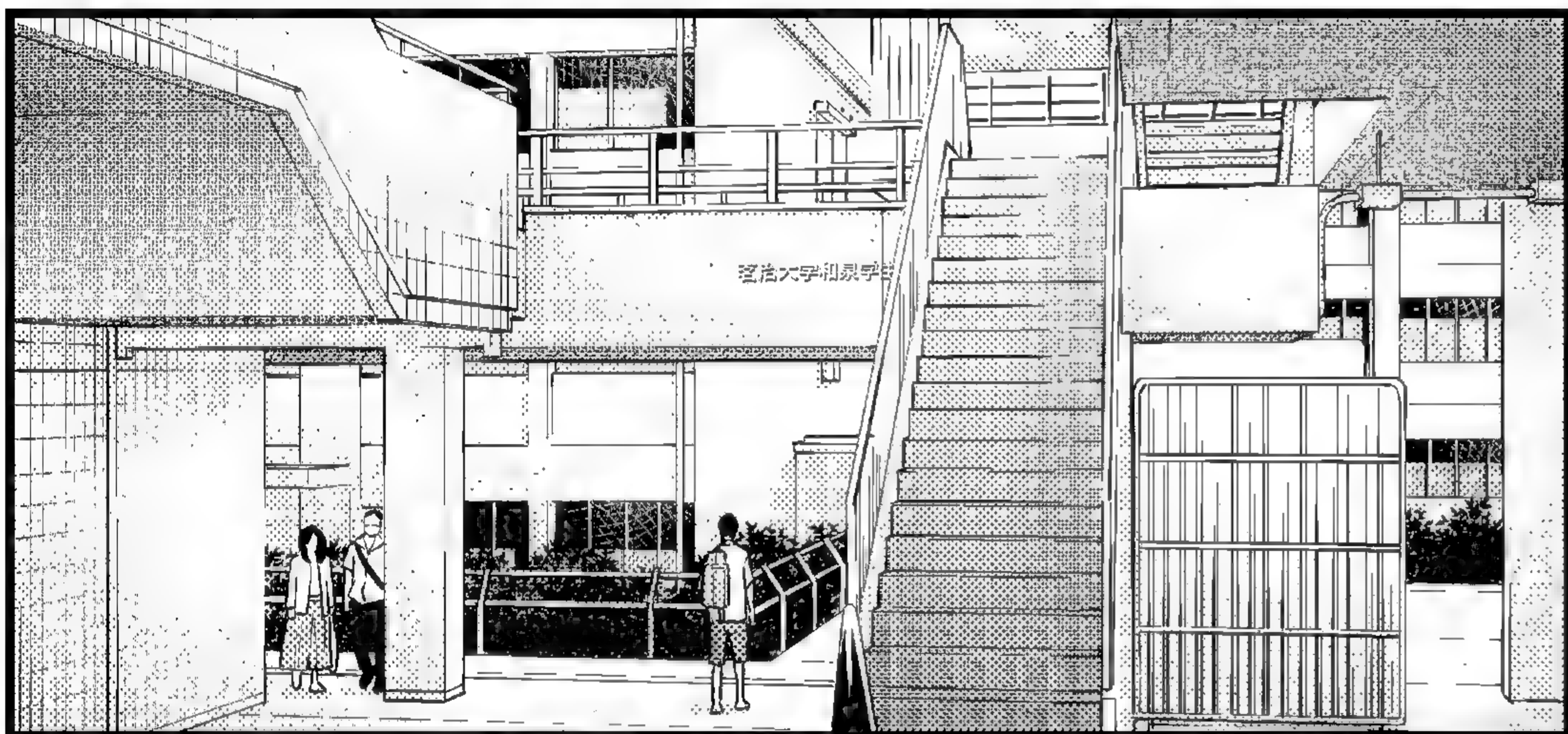
SHE DEFINITELY DOESN'T HAVE A BOY-FRIEND.

TOTALLY!

I BET SHE'S NEVER EVEN KISSED ANYONE BEFORE.



...SHE'LL
JUST SEEM
LIKE SHE'S
PLAYING
PRETEND.



PROBABLY.



IS HANA-
SEMPAI
HERE
TODAY?

YES,
SHE
IS.

DO YOU
THINK
SHE'LL
COME
TO THE
CLUB-
ROOM?

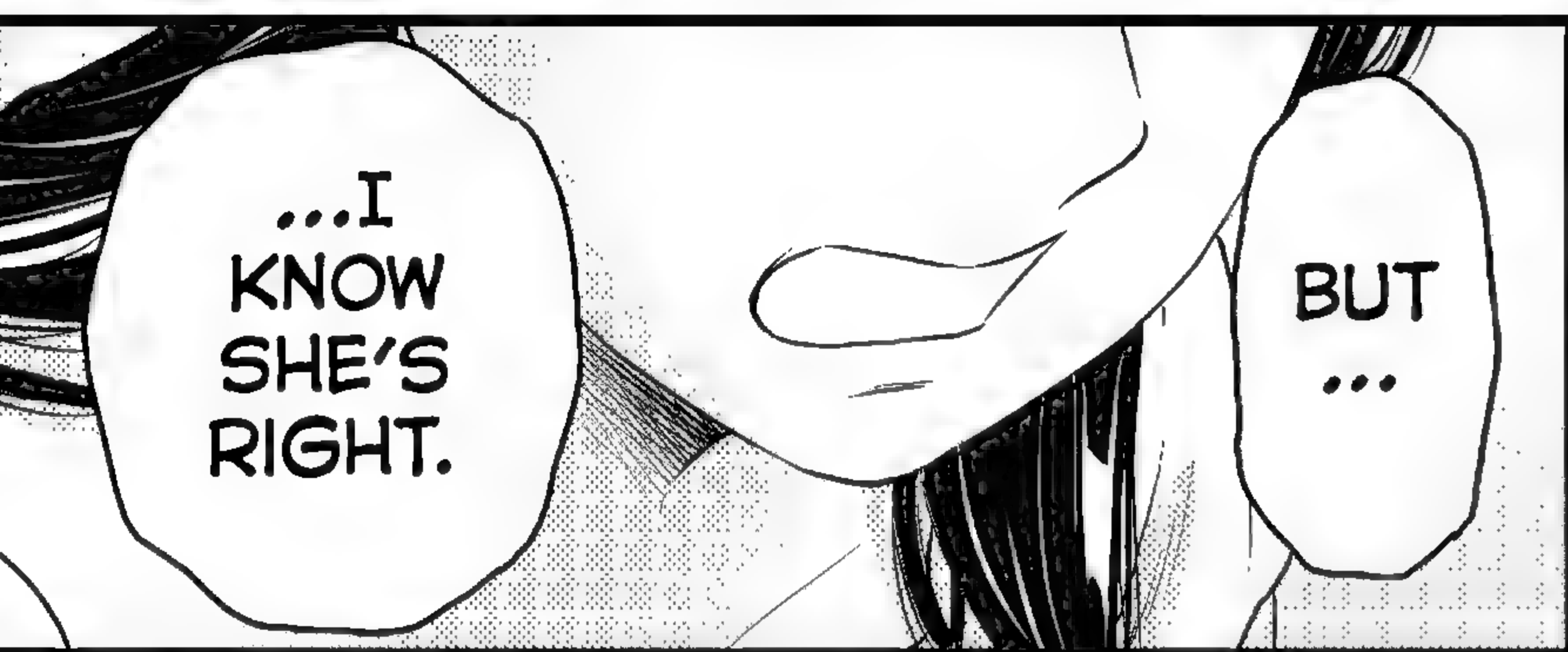
AKI-
MOTO-
SEM-
PAI!





IT'S LIKE,
DOES SHE
THINK SHE'S
BETTER THAN
ME JUST
BECAUSE
SHE'S EXPE-
RIENCED?!

I WAS SO
MAD, I
COULDN'T
BUDGE FOR
A WHILE.



...I
KNOW
SHE'S
RIGHT.

BUT
...



...KNOW
THE FIRST
THING
ABOUT
THIS.

I
DON'T
...



THEN
...

...



I SEE
...

WHAT A
BITCH.



IT ONLY
BOTHERS ME
BECAUSE IT
REALLY HIT
HOME.

IF I HAD
TO DO A
KISSING
SCENE,

HOW
COULD I BE
CONVINCING
IF I'VE NEVER
KISSED OR
EVEN DATED
ANYONE?



**...TRY
ON ME?**

**...DO
YOU
WANT
TO...**



IF YOU DON'T
THINK YOU'LL
GET IT UNTIL
YOU TRY IT,
THEN YOU
SHOULD.

I'M NOT
JOKING.



IT'S JUST
FOR THE
ROLE,
RIGHT?

WE'RE BOTH
GIRLS, AND IT'S
JUST PRACTICE,
SO YOU DON'T
HAVE TO COUNT
IT AS YOUR
FIRST KISS OR
ANYTHING.



HUH
?!

WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING,
YUKA?

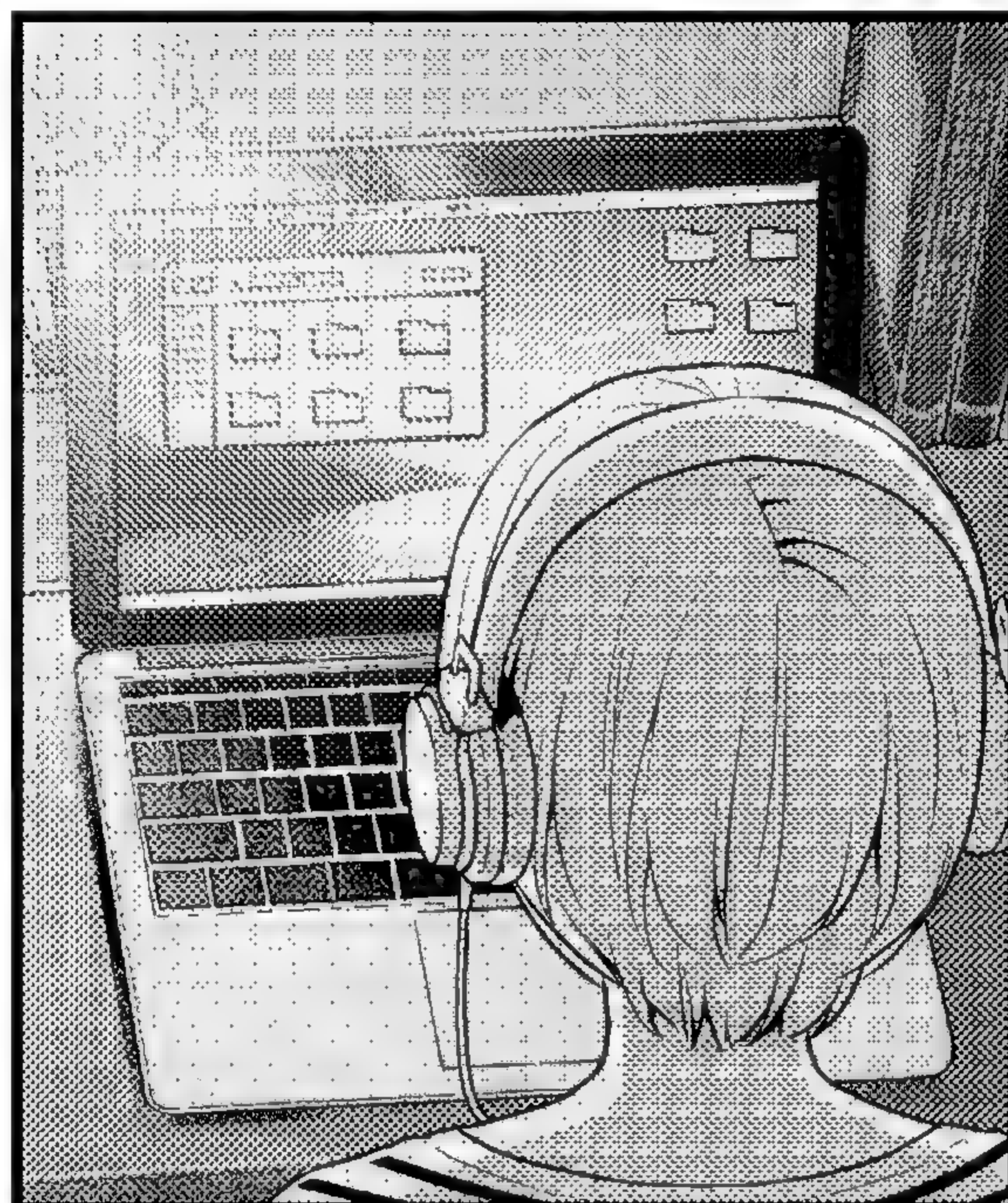
QUIT
JOKING
AROUND
...



HAVE
YOU SEEN
HANA-
SEMPAI?

...THAT
I HAVE A
FOLDER
NAMED
AFTER YOU
WITH YOUR
PICTURES
IN IT.

NOT
YET.



NO ONE
MUST EVER
FIND OUT...



OR
THAT
...



MIYABI

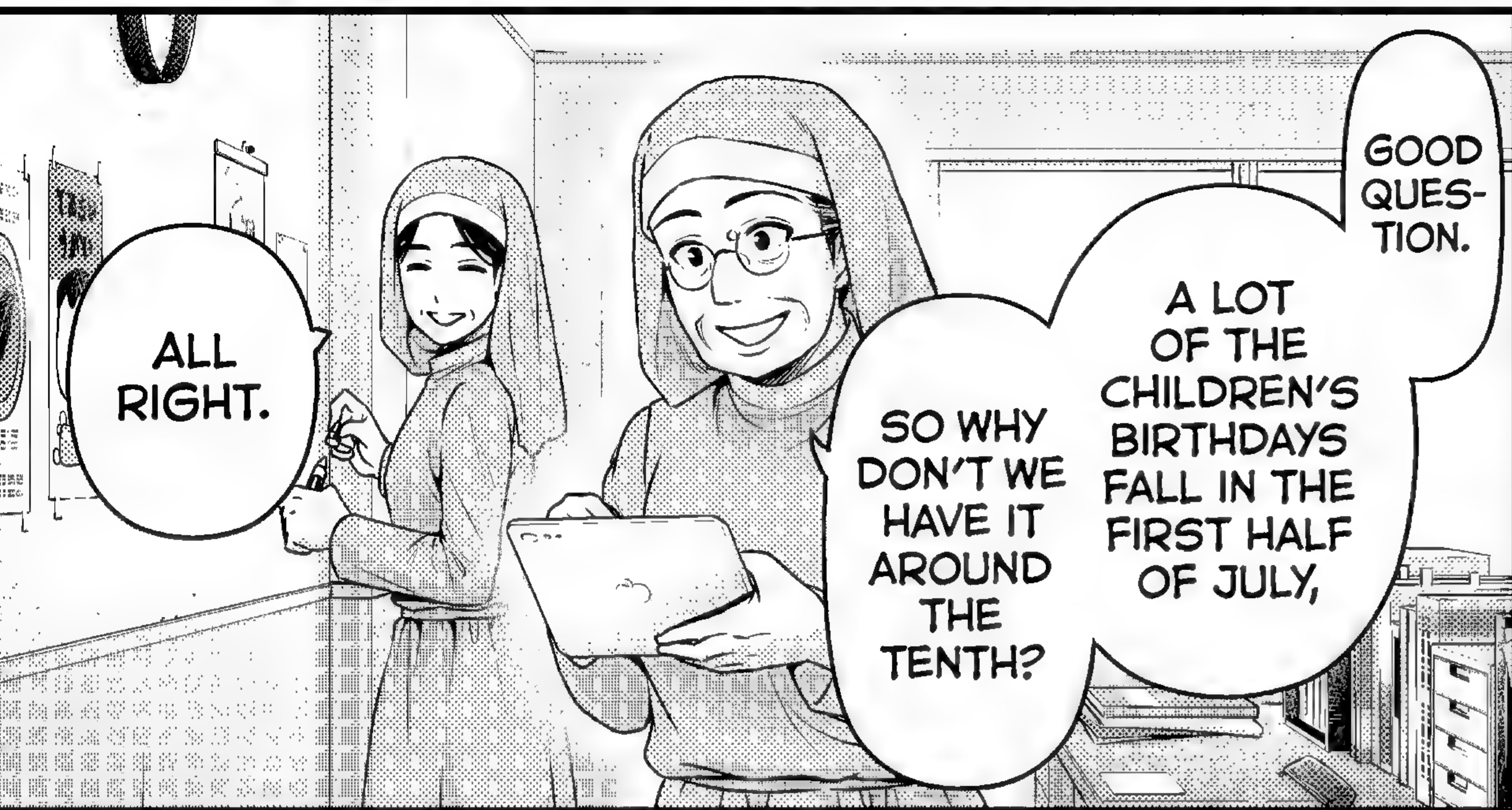
...I'M
IN LOVE
WITH
YOU.

MANC

EXTRA MANGA

Close
Siblings

Mao & Leo



ALL
RIGHT.

GOOD
QUESTION.

SO WHY
DON'T WE
HAVE IT
AROUND
THE
TENTH?

A LOT
OF THE
CHILDREN'S
BIRTHDAYS
FALL IN THE
FIRST HALF
OF JULY,



MA'AM.

WHEN
SHOULD
WE HOLD
NEXT
MONTH'S
BIRTHDAY
PARTY?



THAT RE-
MINDS ME.
MAO'S
BIRTHDAY
IS COMING
UP, TOO.

IT'S
HARD TO
BELIEVE
SHE'S
ALREADY
20.



...SHE
AND HER
BROTHER
ARE
DOING
WELL.

I
HOPE
...



THIS IS WHY I
KEEP SAYING
WE SHOULD
GET SEPARATE
BEDS.

SEE?



THEN
AGAIN,
WE DON'T
REALLY
HAVE
SPACE
FOR A
DOUBLE
BED.

IT'S FINE.
WE CAN
JUST
SNUGGLE
UP IN A
TWIN.



LIKE I
SAID,
IT'S NO
BIG—

GAH!
AT LEAST
COVER
YOUR
DOWN-
STAIRS!
JEEZ!

DOES
IT NOT
MATTER IF
YOU WAKE
UP ON THE
FLOOR?!

BUT
I FEEL
LIKE I'M
GOING TO
HURT YOU
REALLY BAD
ONE OF
THESE
DAYS.



WHY
NOOOT?

NO.

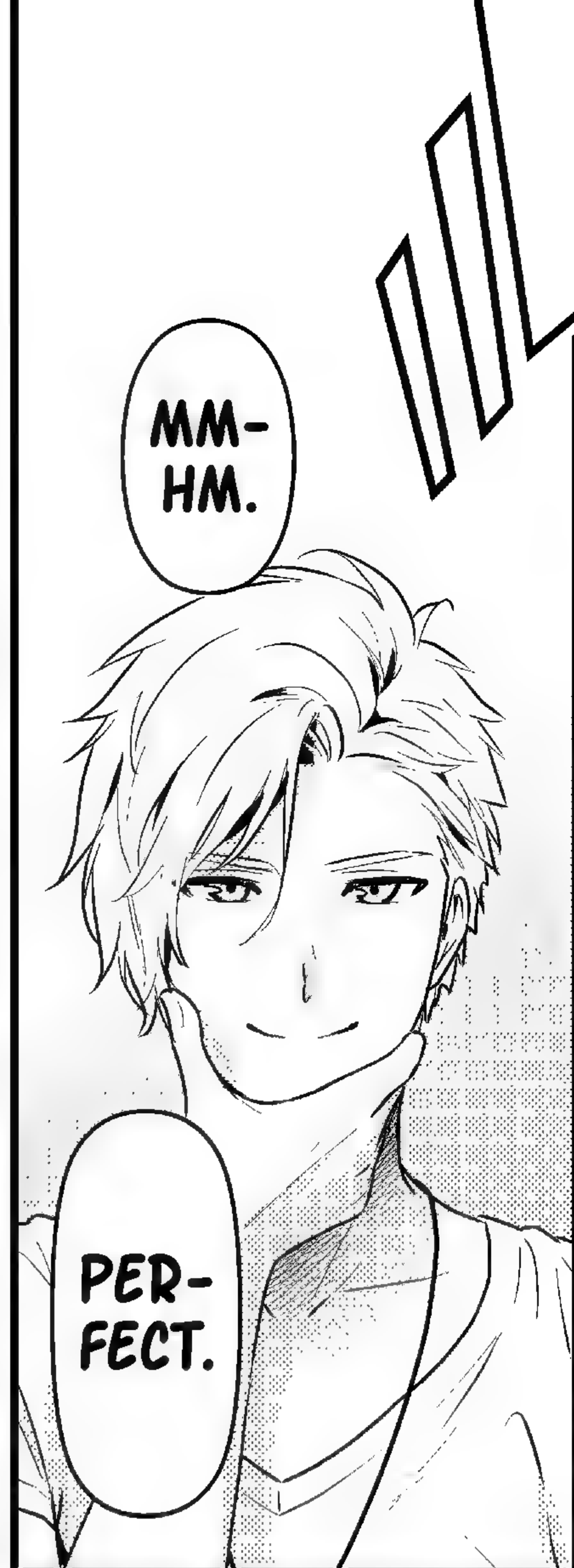
I SLEEP
BETTER IN
THE SAME
BED AS
YOU.





MY
SISTER'S
JUST THE
CUTEST
THING
IN THE
WHOLE
WORLD.

YOU GOT
ME NEW
CLOTHES
AGAIN?



MM-
HM.

PER-
FECT.



AL-
RIGHTY!
LET'S
GO ON
A DATE
UNTIL
THEN!

START-
ING AT
THREE.

WHEN
DO YOU
HAVE
WORK
TODAY?



I THOUGHT
THEY'D LOOK
GREAT ON
YOU, SO I
BOUGHT 'EM.

YEAH.
ONE OF THE
MODELS
WORE
THOSE ON
A SHOOT.



WAIT,
ISN'T THAT
LEO, THE
MODEL?

YOU'RE
RIGHT.
THEY'RE
GOR-
GEOUS.

HEY,
LOOK.
DOESN'T
THAT
COUPLE
LOOK
SO CUTE?



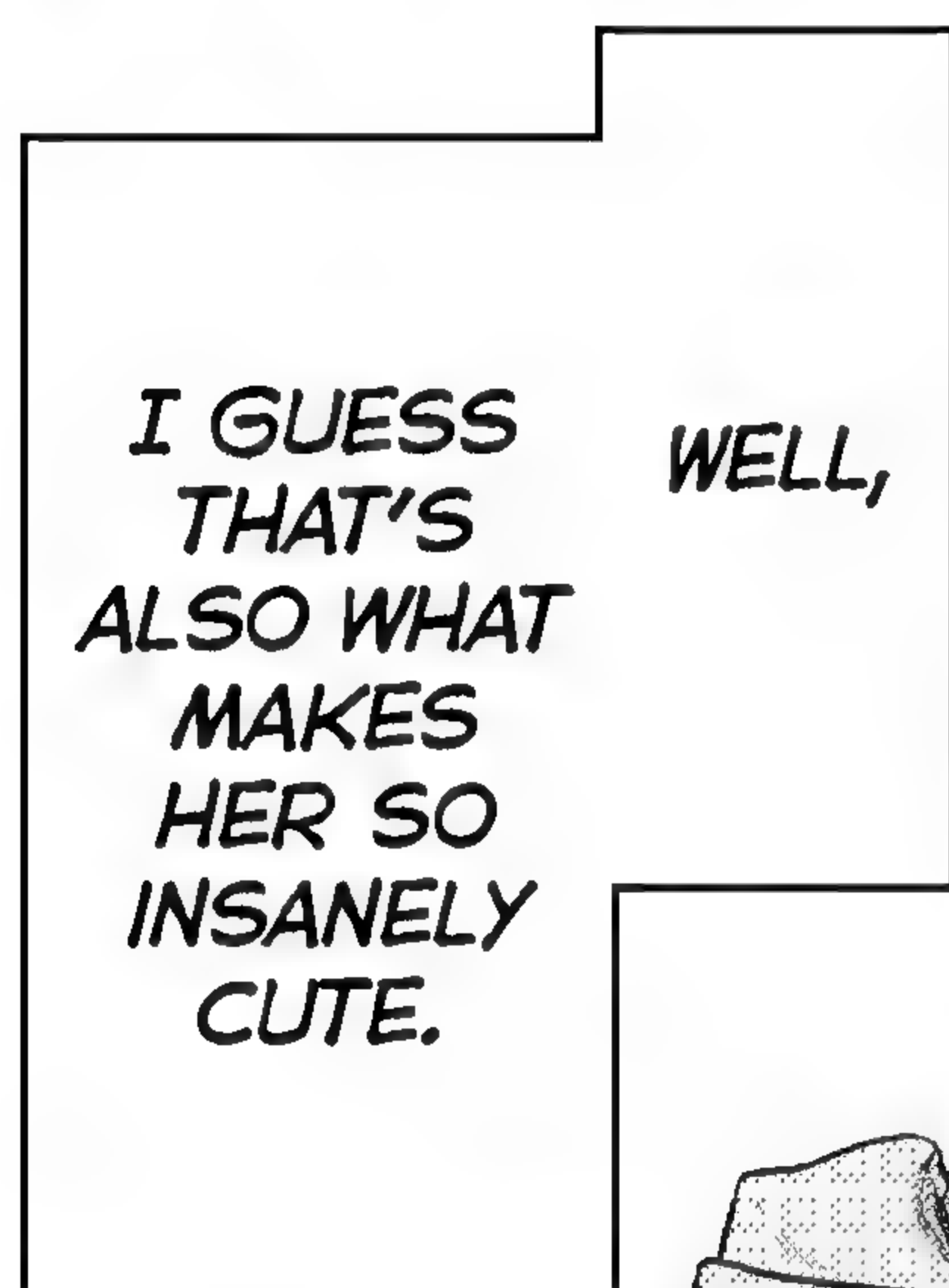
OH!
THERE'S
A NEW
CREPE
SHOP!

THEY
HAVE A
TOMALLEY
CREPE!
YUM!

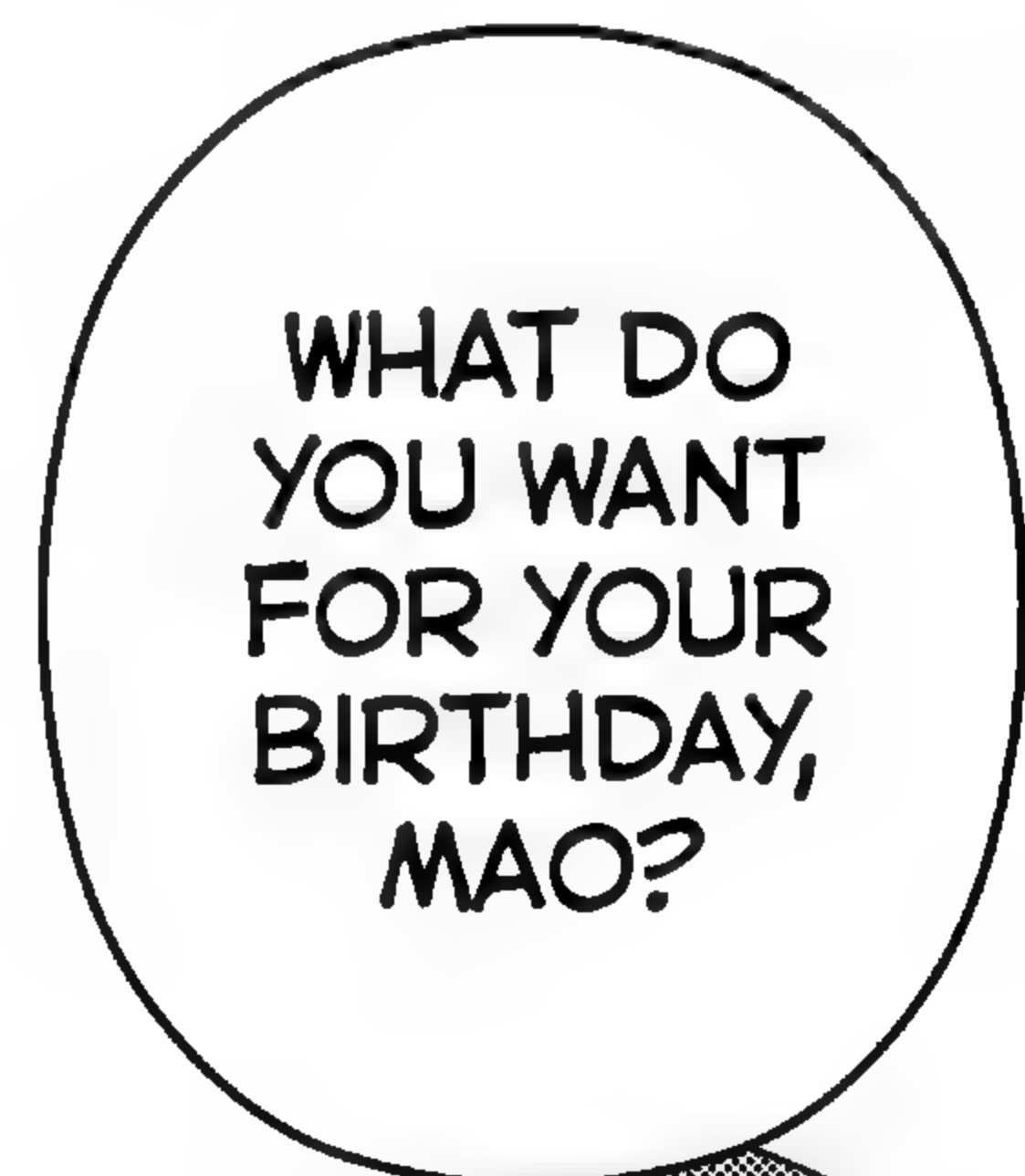
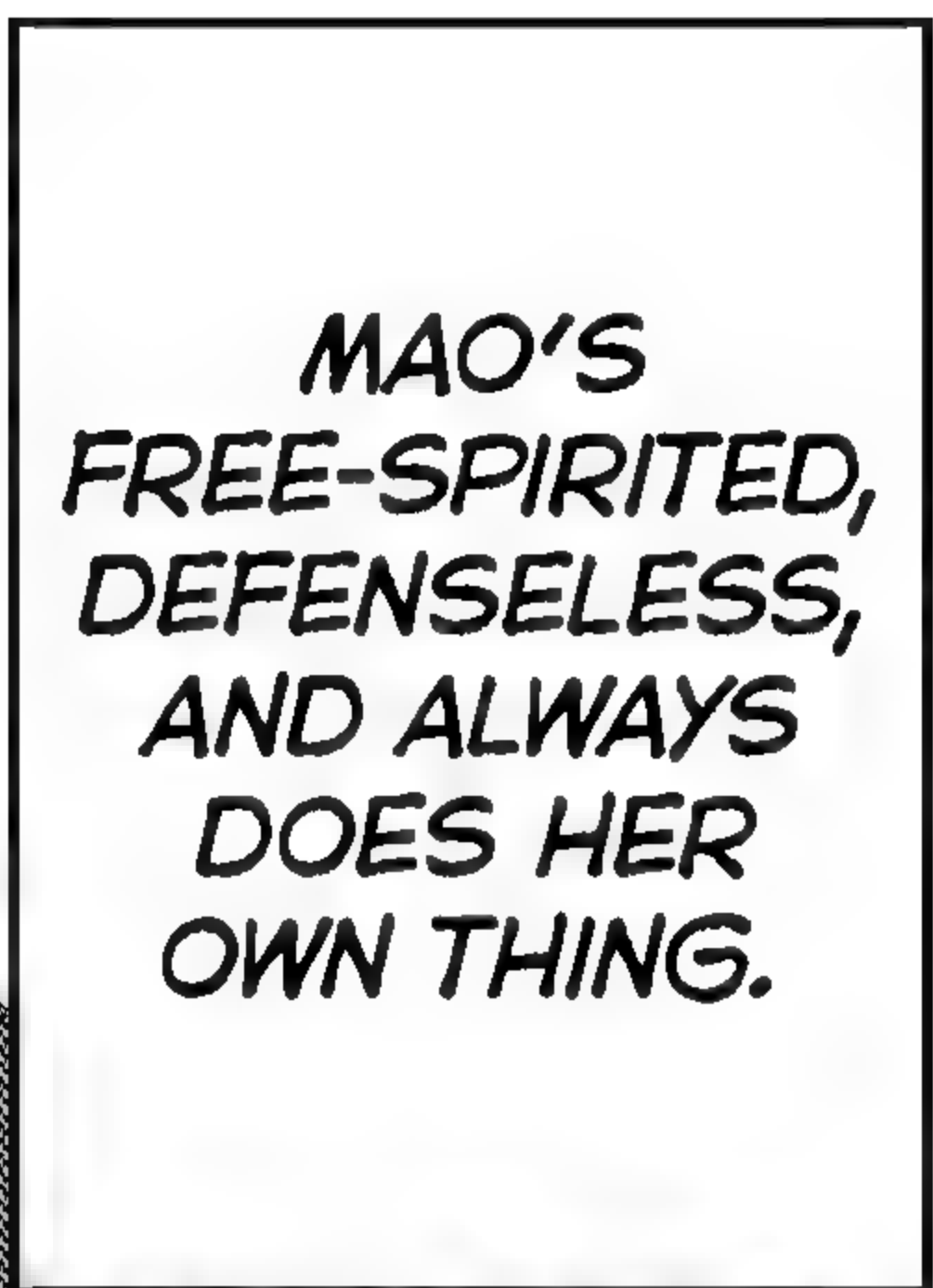
I REALLY
AM THE
PERFECT
MATCH
FOR A
CUTIE LIKE
MAO...

HEH,
HEH.
YEAH,
WE LOOK
GOOD TOGETH-
ER,
DON'T
WE?





WELL,







Secret “Feelings” Revealed.

THEY CAN'T GO BACK
TO BEING JUST FRIENDS.
AFTER SAYING GOODBYE TO
MIYABI, YUKA*DISAPPEARS...

...
BEEN
LIKE
YOU.

IF ONLY I
COULD'VE
...

The New Love Triangle Takes a Shocking Turn!

NATSUO TAKES HIS FIRST
CRACK AT AN EROTIC NOVEL!
...WAIT. HOW'D IT TURN OUT
LIKE THIS?!

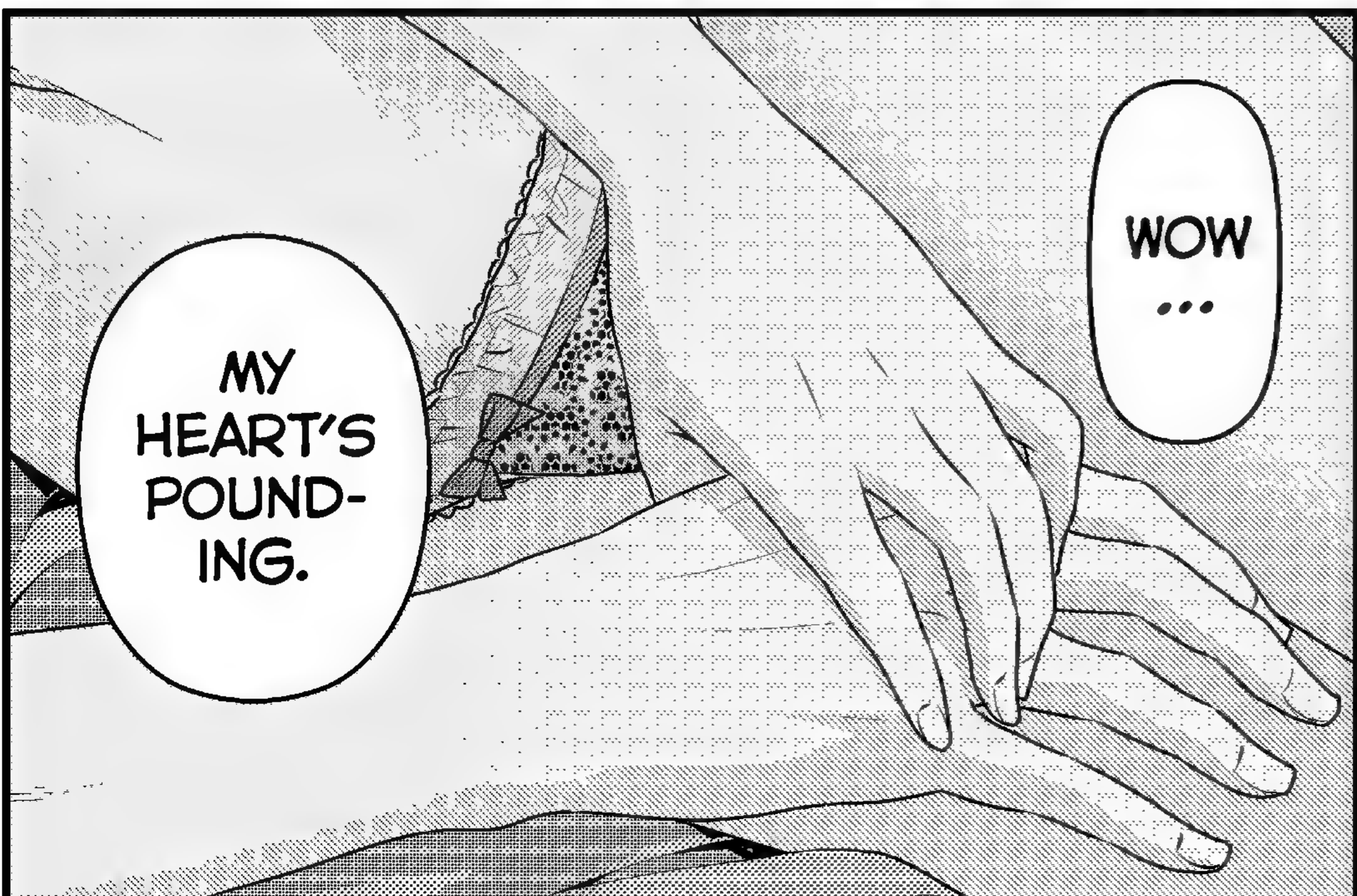
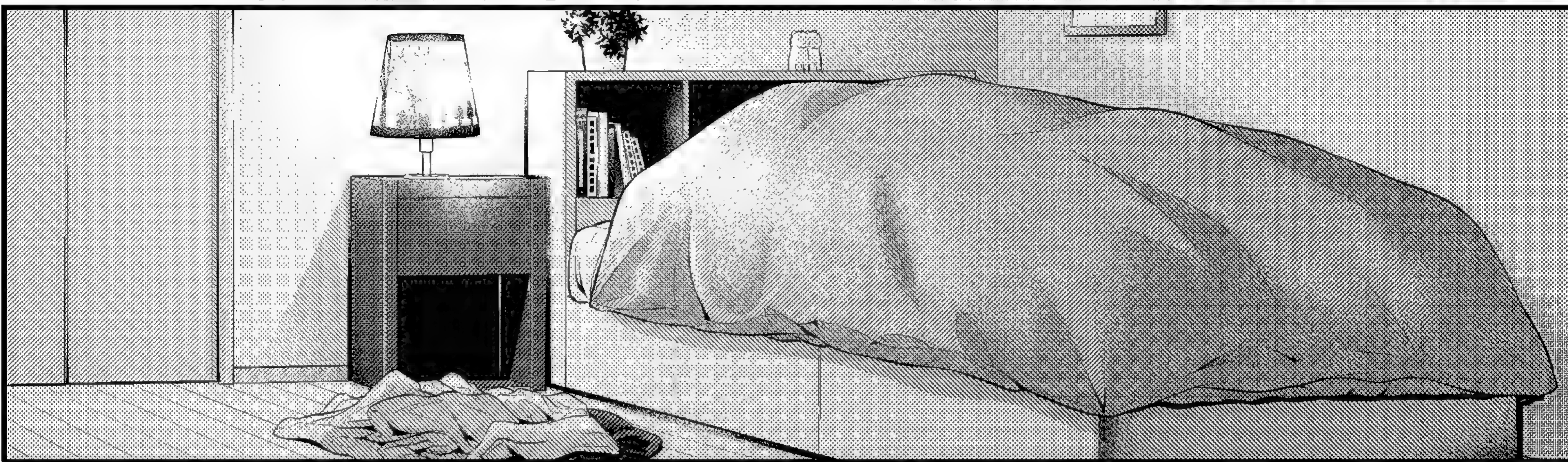
DON'T
WANNA
ACCEPT
THAT YOUR
EX HAS A
NEW MAN?

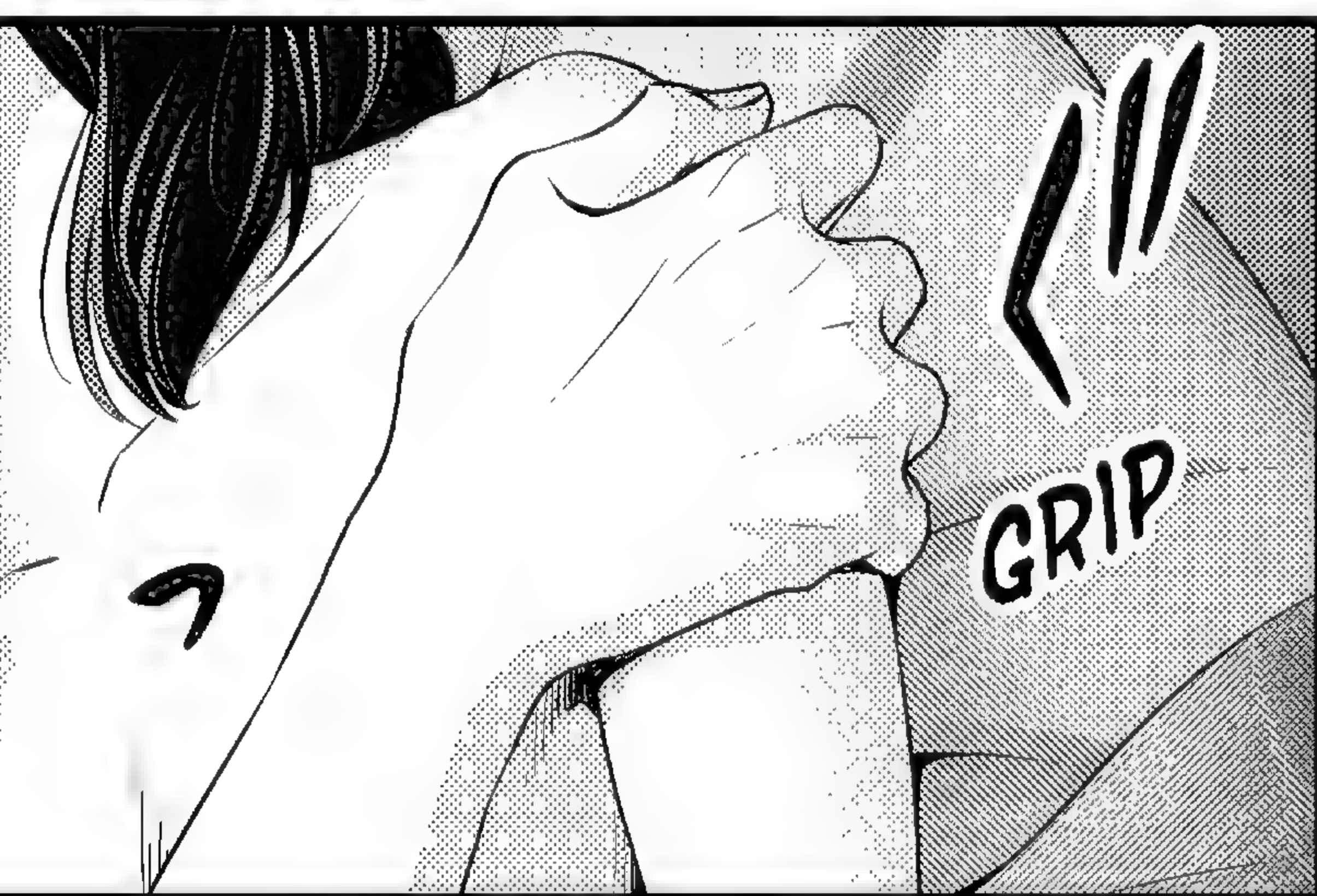
THE DISTANCE
SUDDENLY SHRINKS
BETWEEN HINA
AND TANABE!
NATSUO FEELS...
CONFLICTED?!

TO BE CONTINUED IN **VOLUME 18!**

NATSU LOVE SHOW









...HOW YOU
TOLD ME NOT
TO GET THE
WRONG IDEA
BACK THEN?

DO YOU
REMEM-
BER...



WE
HAVEN'T
DONE THIS
SINCE OUR
FIRST TIME
TOGETHER
...

...BUT IT'S
COMPLETE-
LY DIFFER-
ENT NOW.

WE'RE IN
A REAL
RELATION-
SHIP THIS
TIME.



AND I HAD
NO IDEA
WHAT LOVE
FELT LIKE.

WELL,
I THOUGHT
WE'D NEVER
SEE EACH
OTHER
AGAIN.



I NEVER
IMAGINED
I'D END UP
FEELING
THIS...

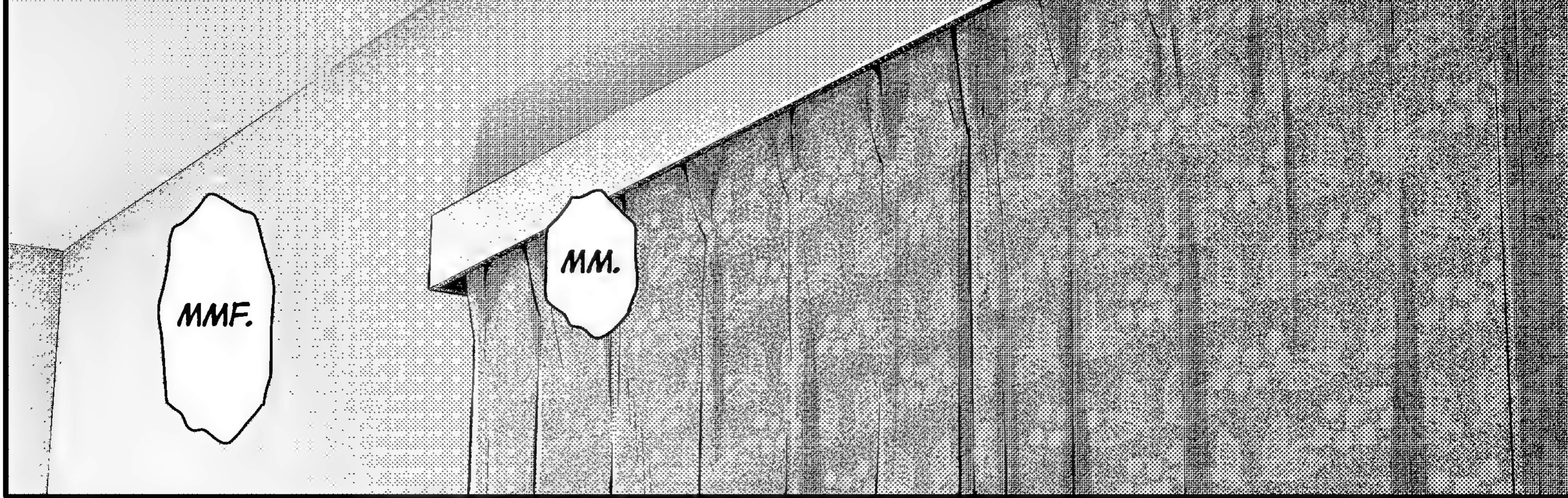
...PENT
UP.



...EVER
PLAY WITH
YOURSELF?

HEY.
DID YOU,
UH...





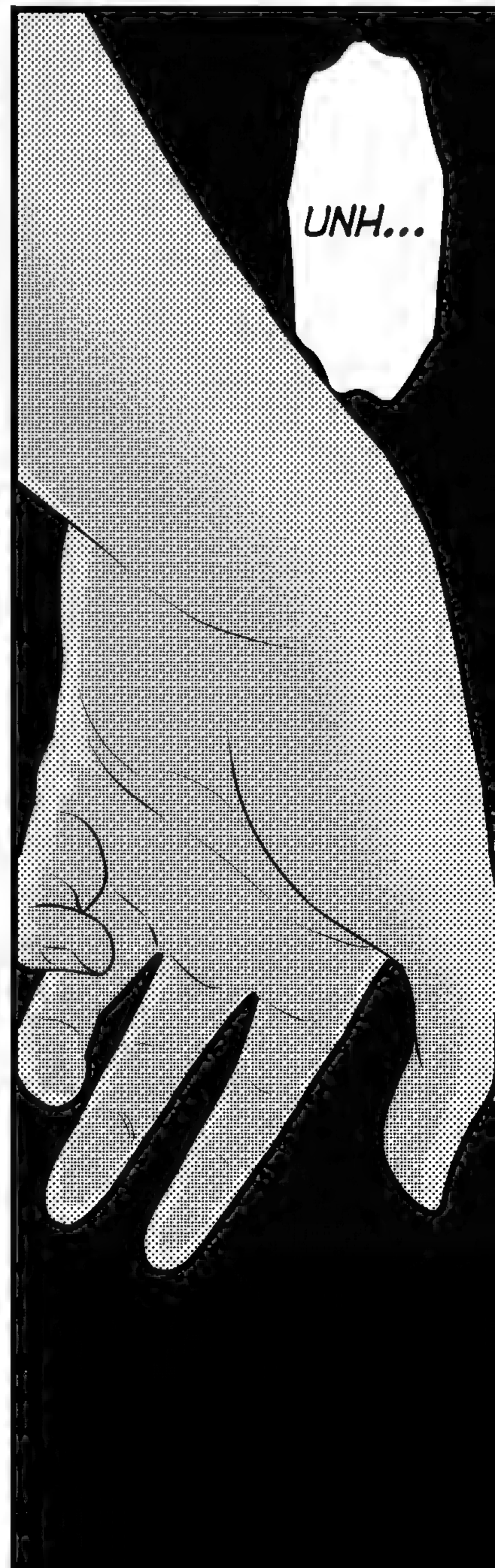
EASIER
SAID THAN
DONE...

AH...



YOU'RE
SO
HARD...

WOW
...



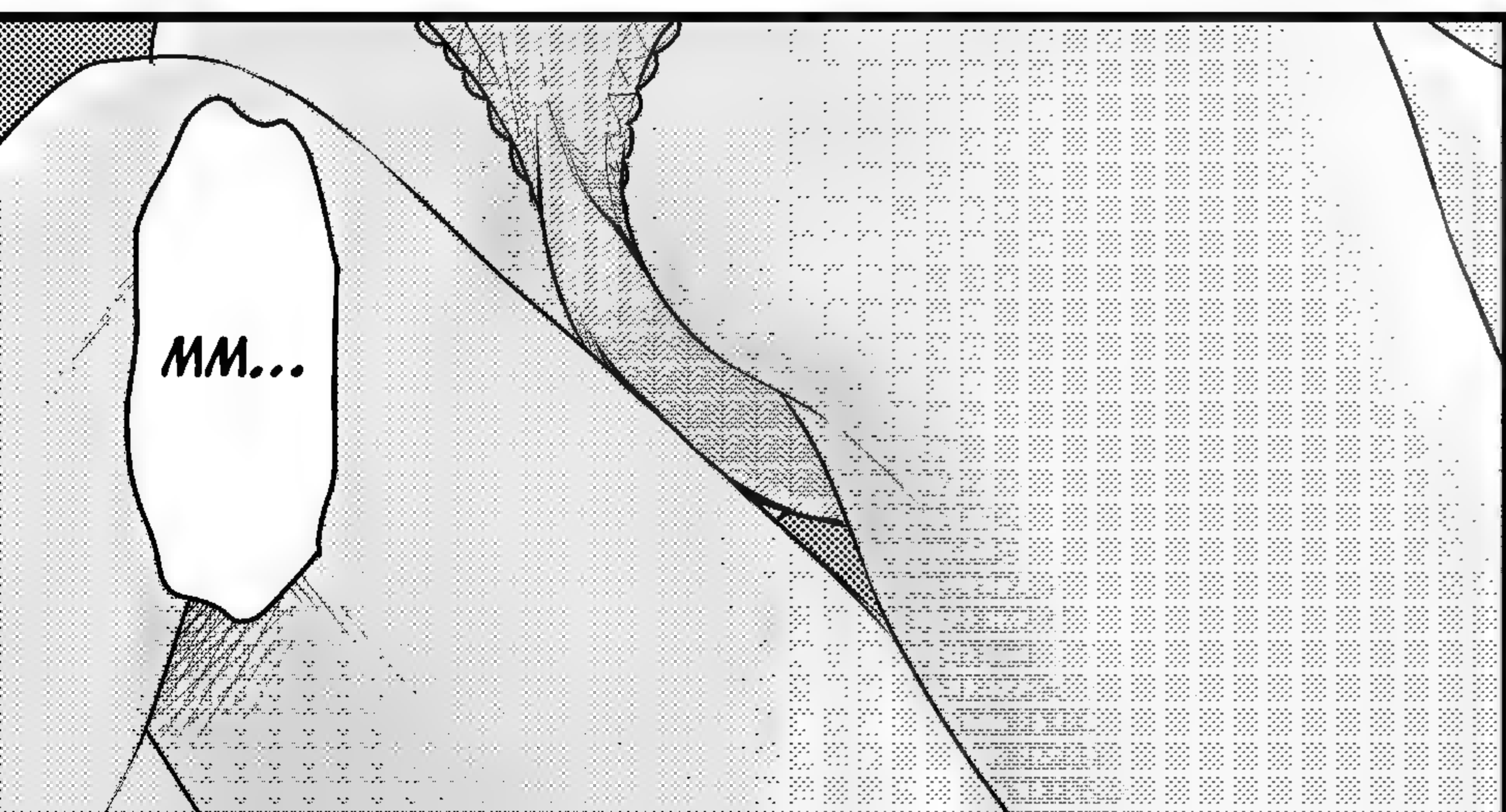
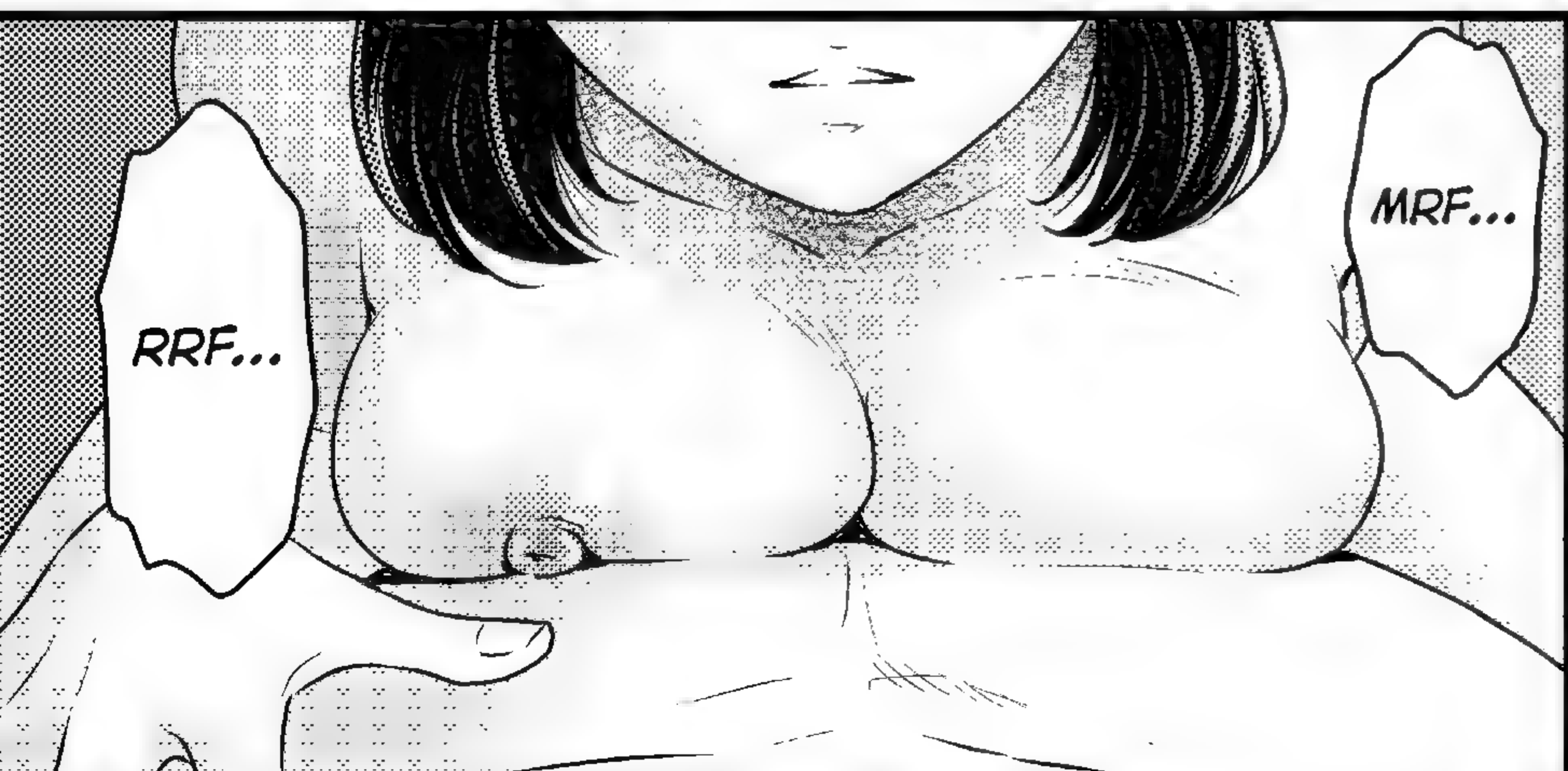
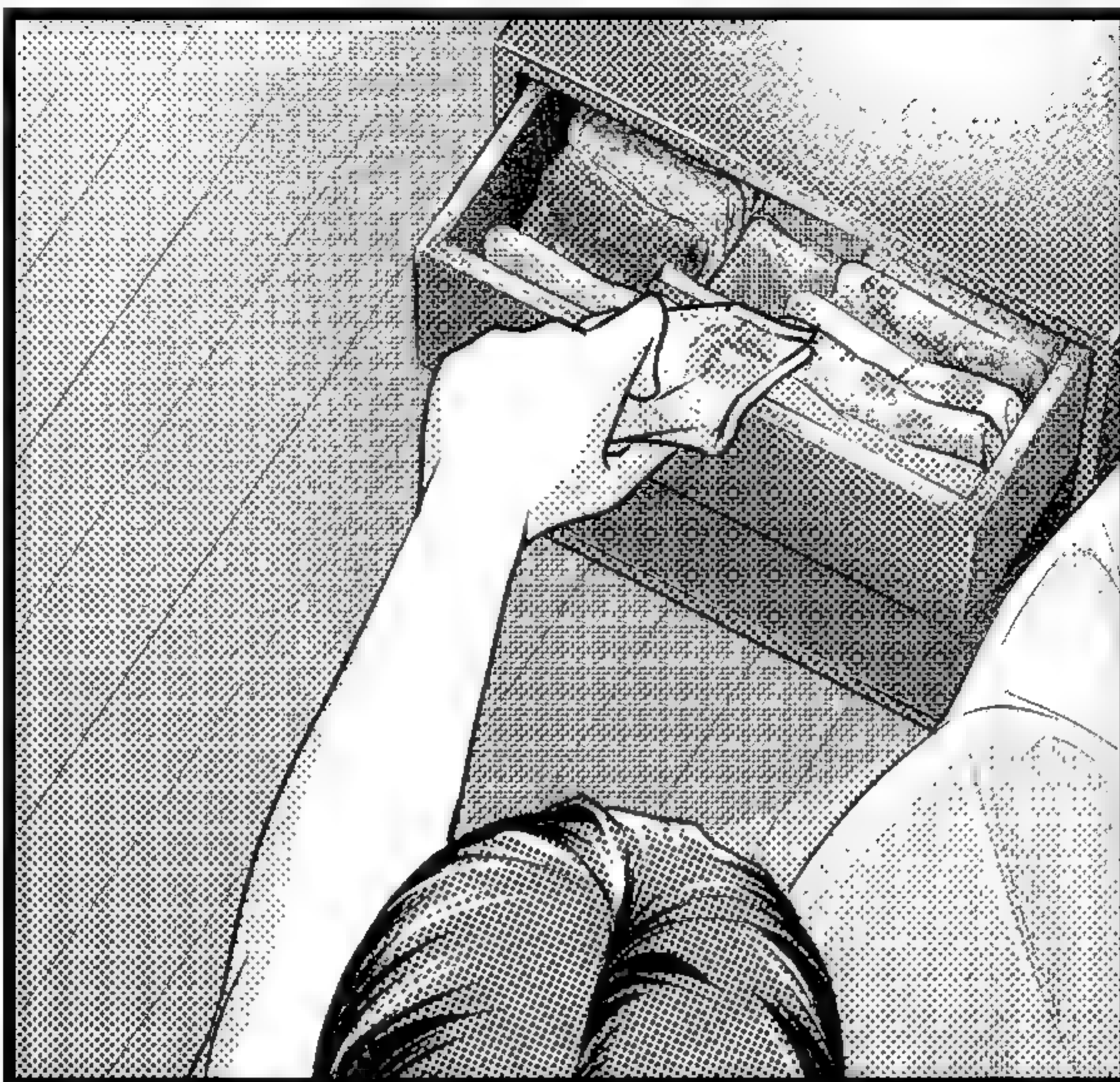
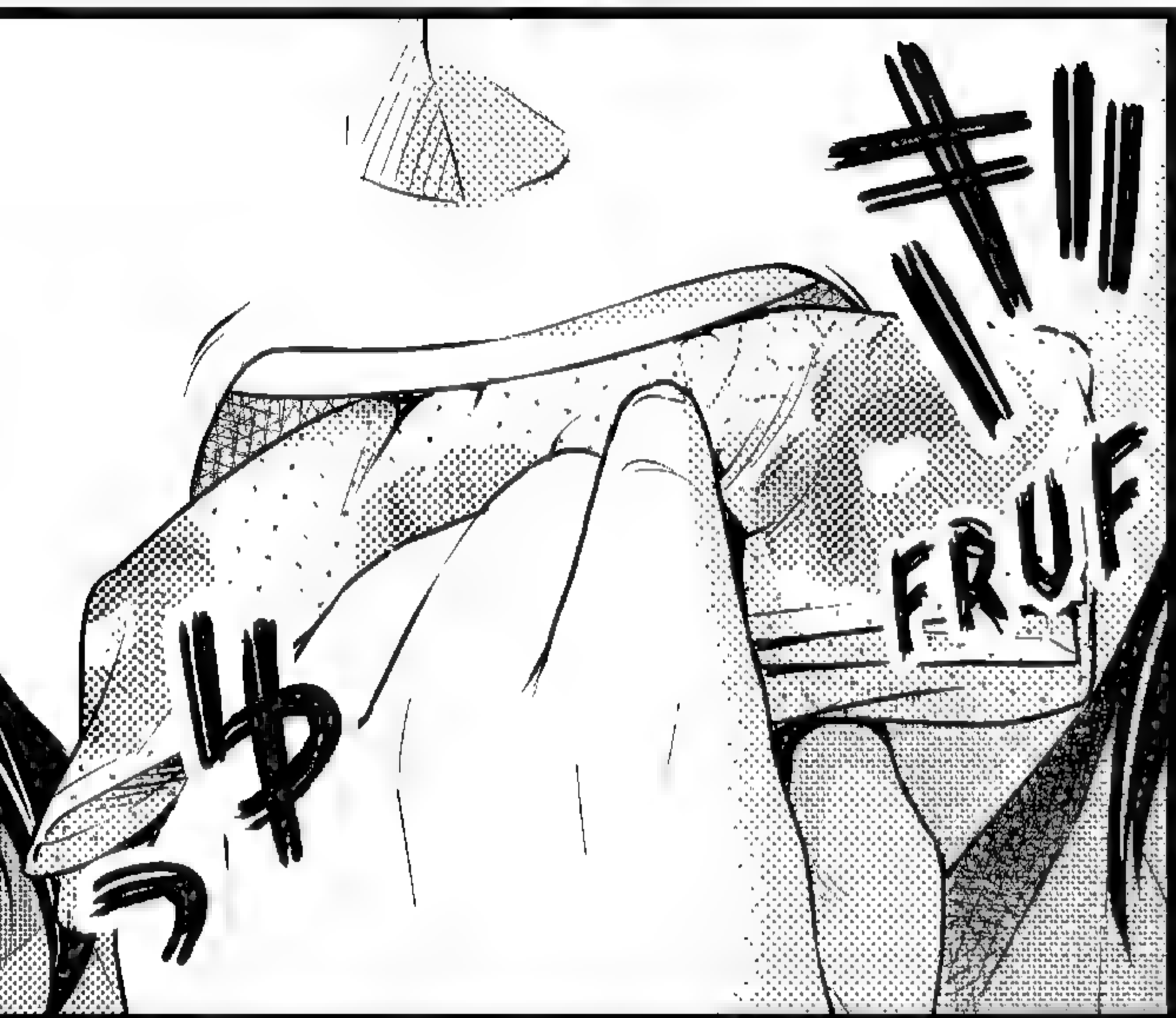
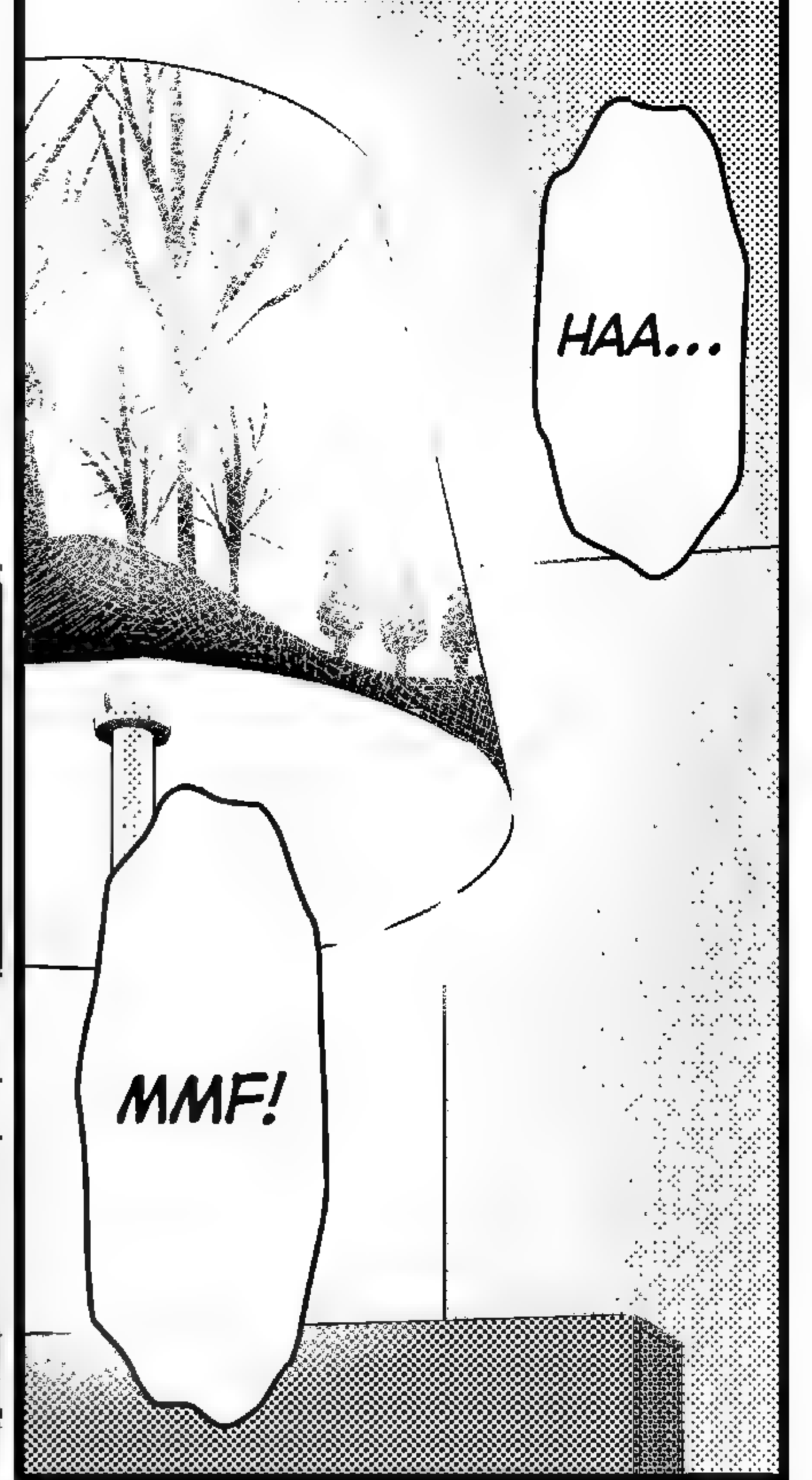
UNH...

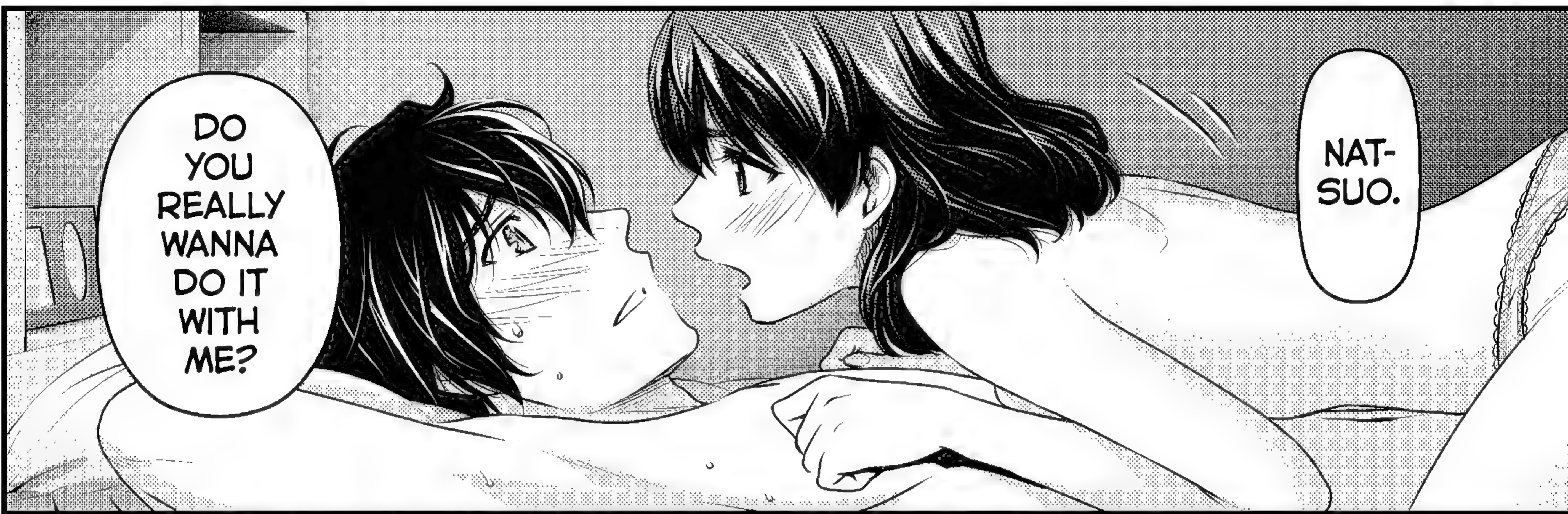


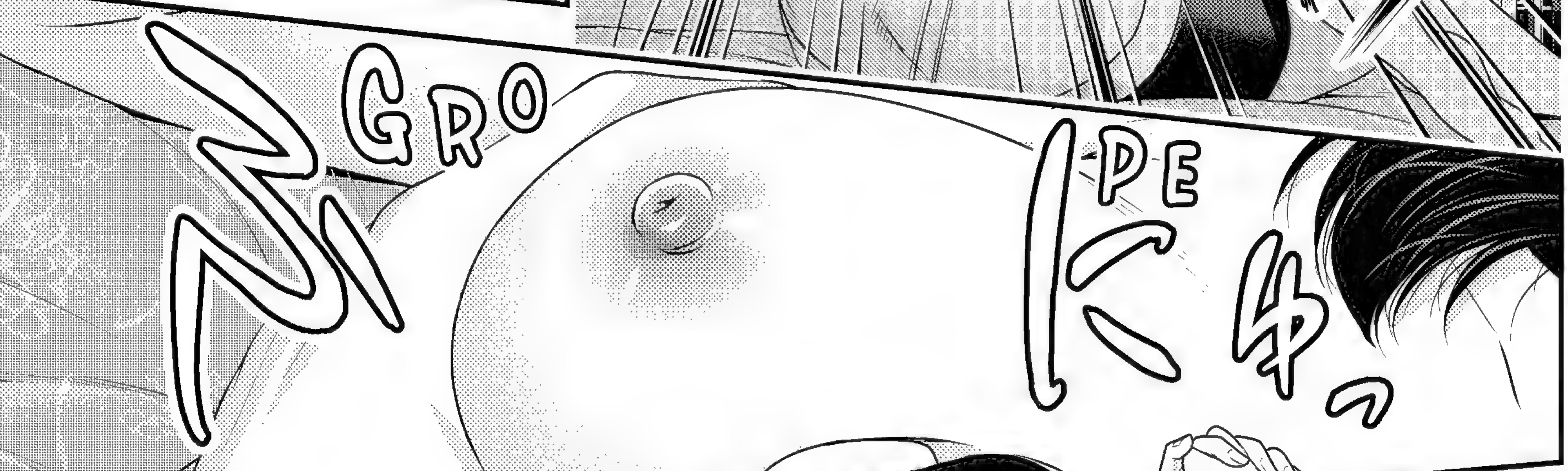
ALSO,

DON'T
EVEN
THINK OF
COMING.

KEEP
YOUR
HANDS
UNDER-
NEATH
THE
PILLOW,
GOT IT?









LOOK
AT
THAT.

IT'S
NOTHING
LIKE LAST
TIME
DOWN
HERE.



Twit

CH



IT'S
EMBAR-
RASS-
ING...

D-
DON'T
SAY STUFF
LIKE THAT.



IT FEELS
LIKE
YOU'RE
READY
TO GO...

B
LUSH



HERE
WE
GO.



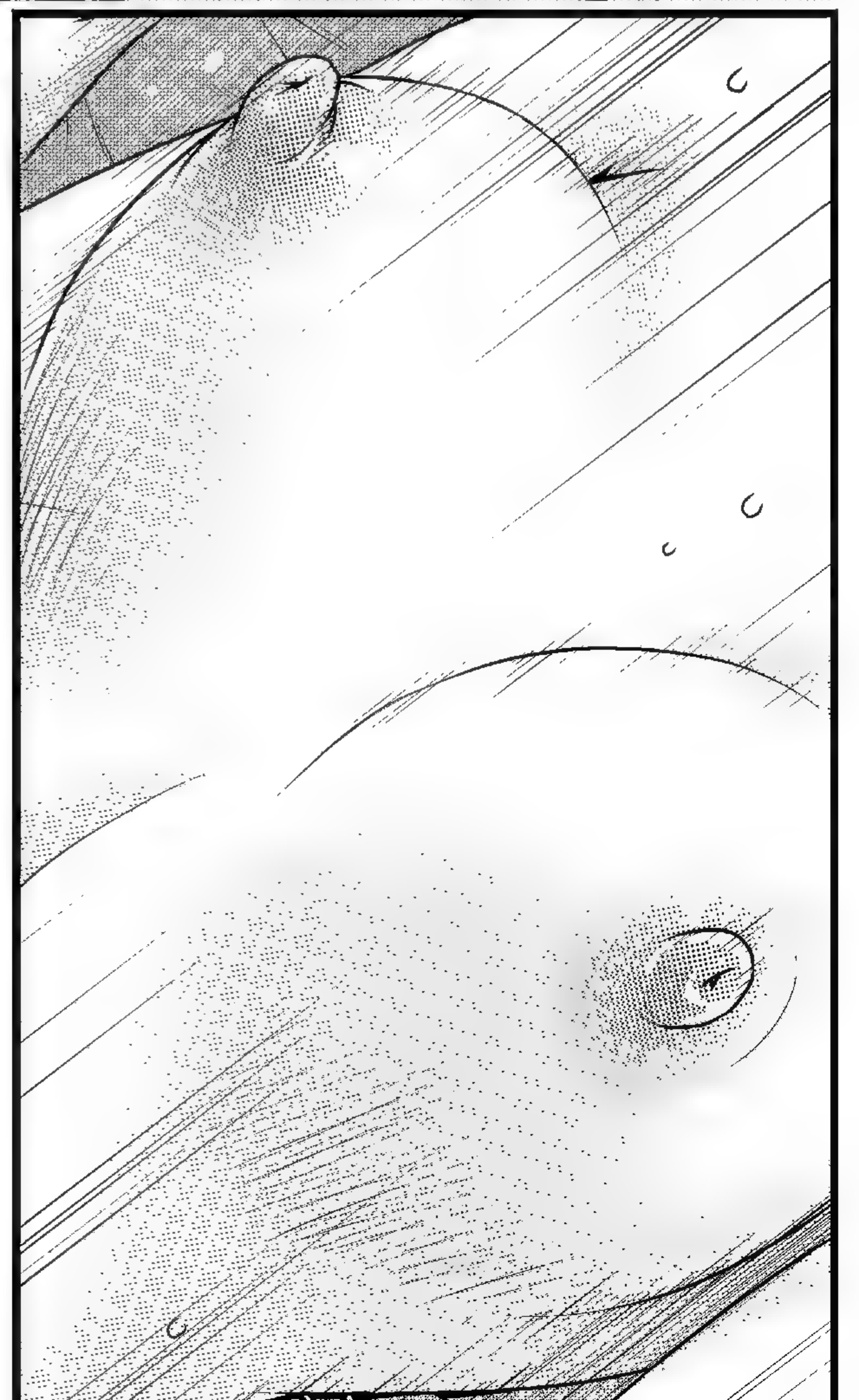
HON-
ESTLY,

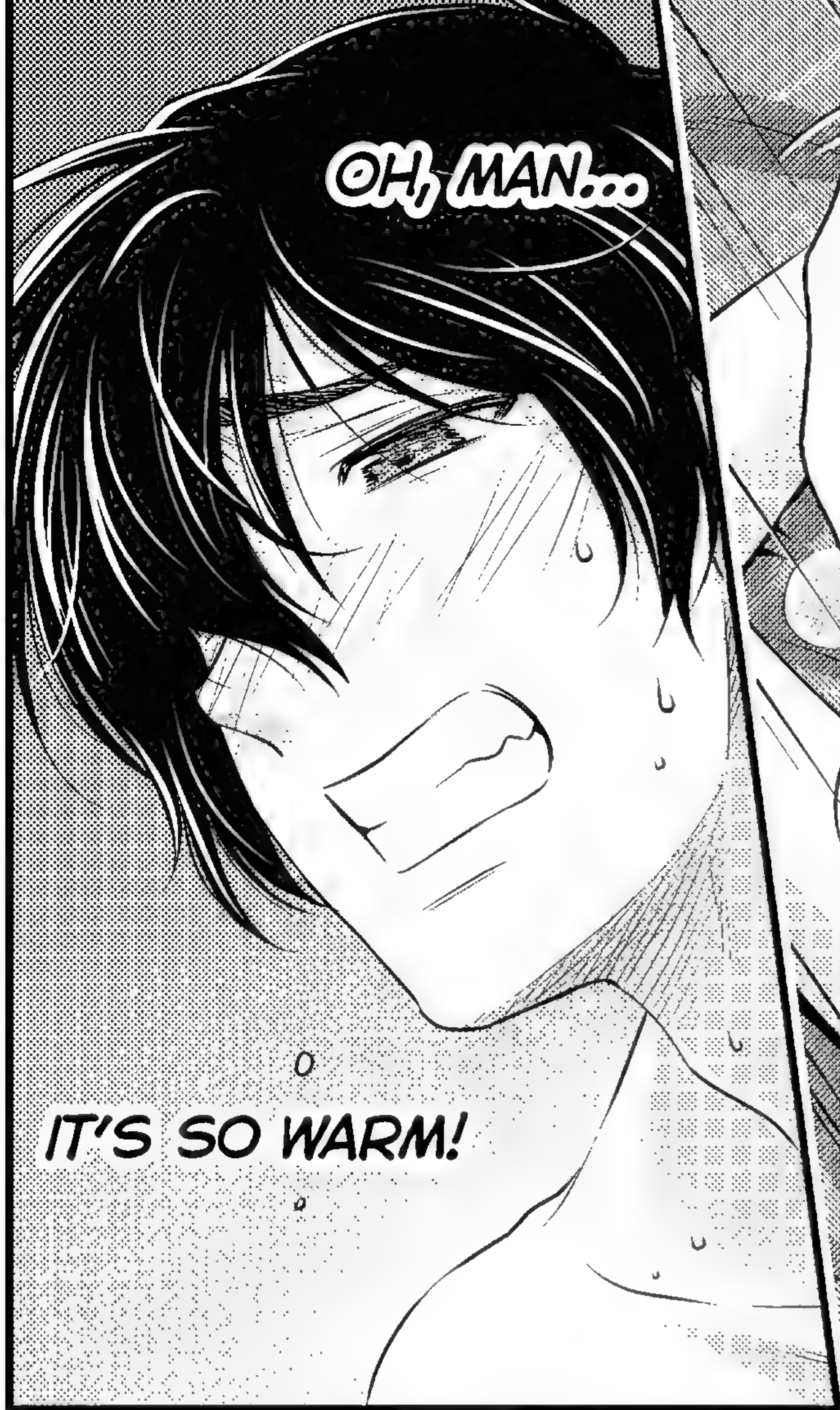
I'M
GLAD
...



SHRT

DON'T BE
EMBAR-
RASSED.







RUI...



NAFUO ...

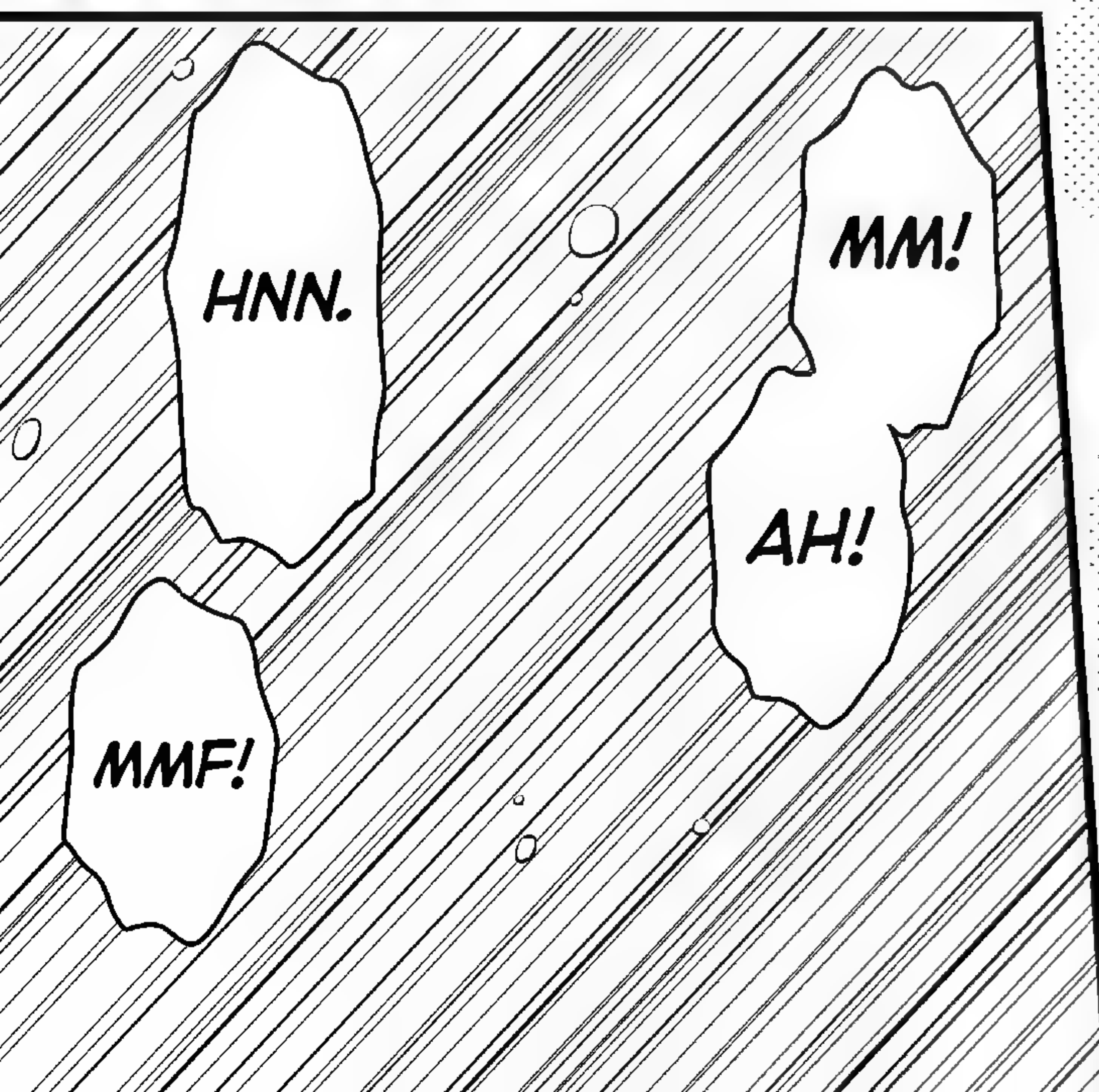
I RUF YOU...

I RUF YOU...



RUI ...

I LOVE YOU, TOO!

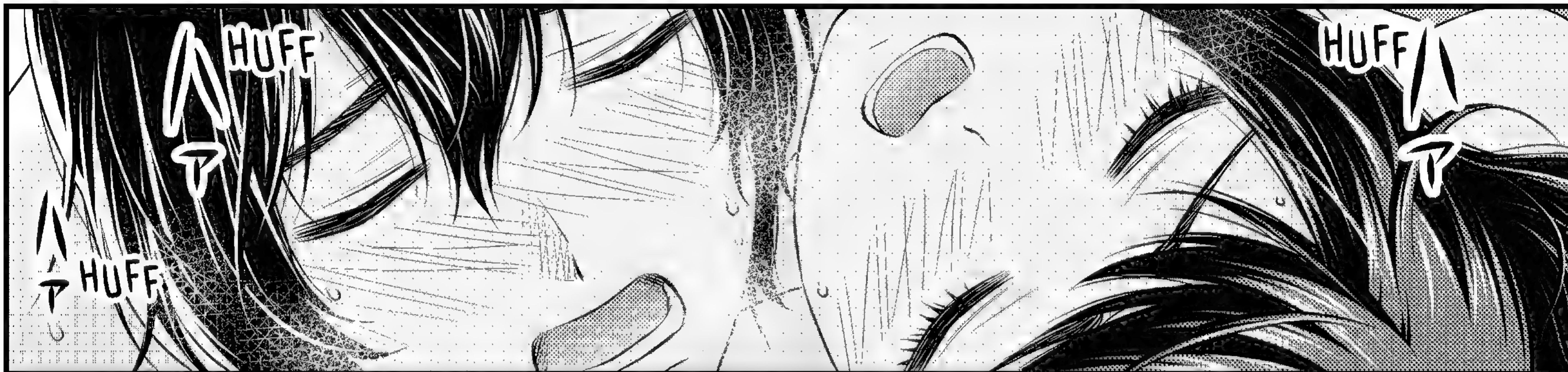
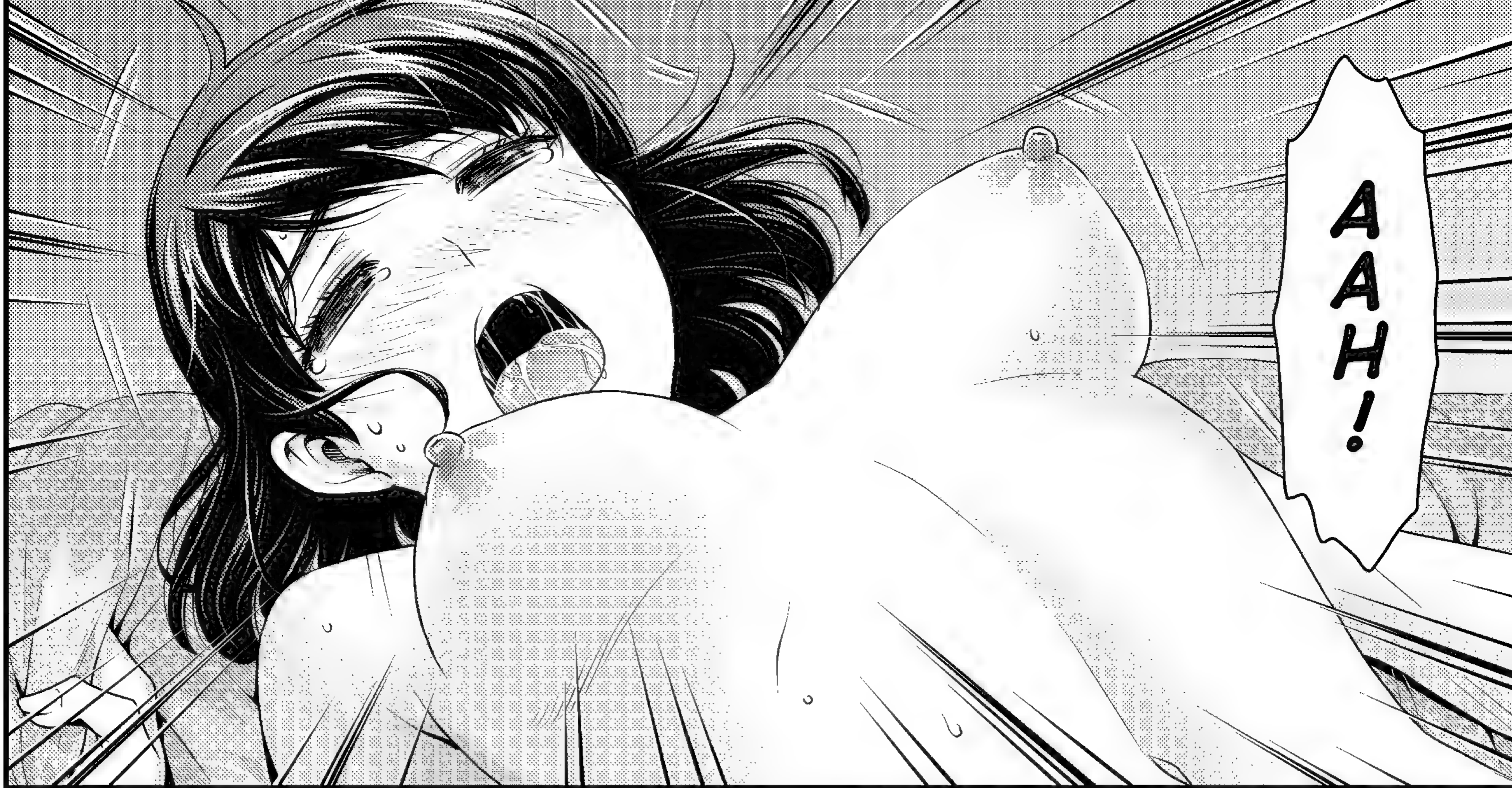


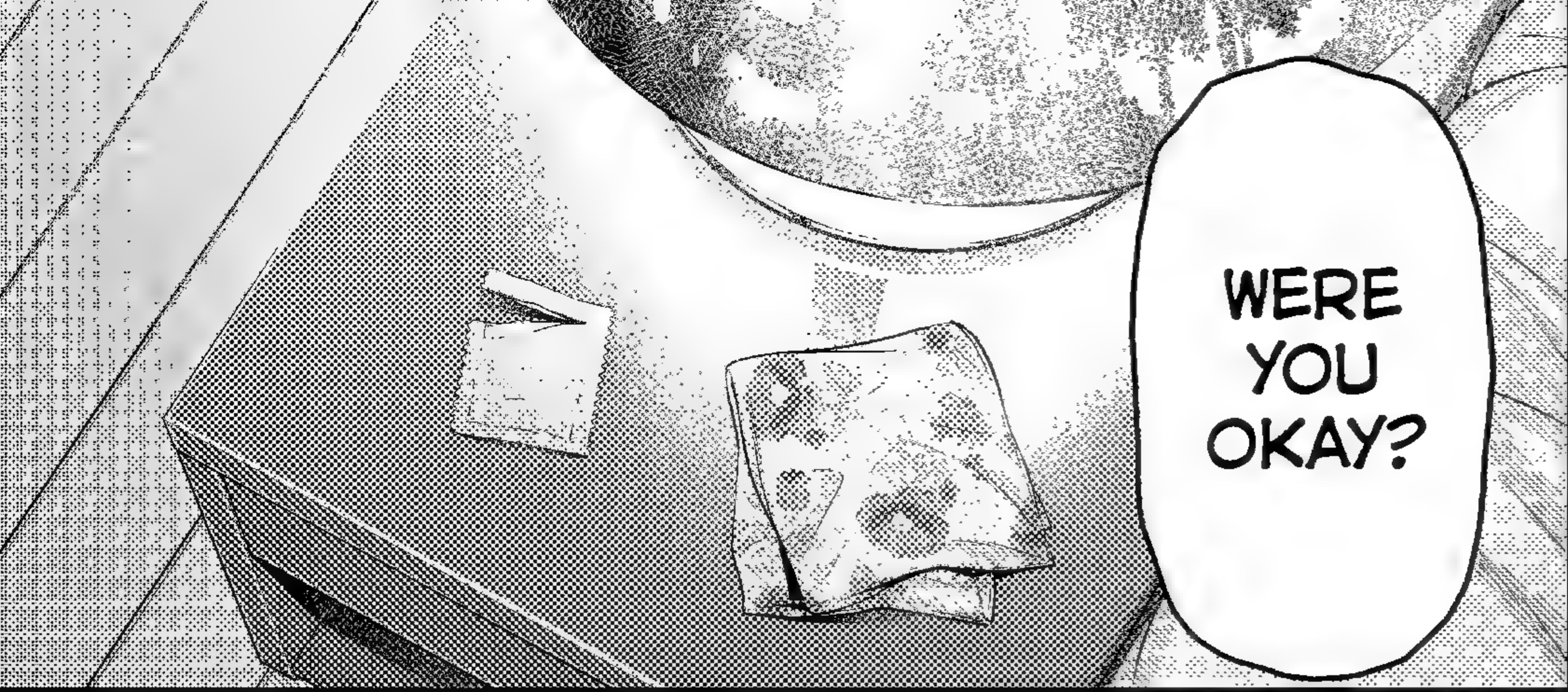
HNN.

MM!

AH!

MMF!





WERE
YOU
OKAY?



DID
YOU
...
...FEEL
GOOD?



I
MEAN,
DID IT
HURT
AT
ALL?



I CAN'T
BELIEVE HOW
DIFFERENT
SEX IS...
...WHEN
YOU
ACTUALLY
LOVE
SOME-
ONE.



PLEASE...
DON'T
LET...
WHAT
ABOUT
YOU?
...THIS ACHE
IN MY CHEST
END.



...BUT
THIS TIME,
I THOUGHT
MY HEART
WAS
GOING TO
BURST.
AND IT
WAS...
FUN.

I DIDN'T
FEEL
ANYTHING
LAST TIME
...



...TO LAST
FOREVER.

I WANT THIS
HAPPINESS...

NATSUO X RUI LOVE LOVE SHOW



END

NATSUOXHINA

SWEET MEMORIES



Domestic Girlfriend

KEI SASUGA

...AFTER
SHE FOUND
A NEW
PLACE
TO LIVE.

I THINK THAT
WAS THE DAY
MAKI LEFT MY
APARTMENT...

I HOPE
EVERYTHING
GOES WELL
BETWEEN
YOU AND
NATSUO-
KUN.

THANKS
FOR
LETTING
ME STAY
FOR SO
LONG,
HINA!

TAP
TAP
TAP

るん
んん

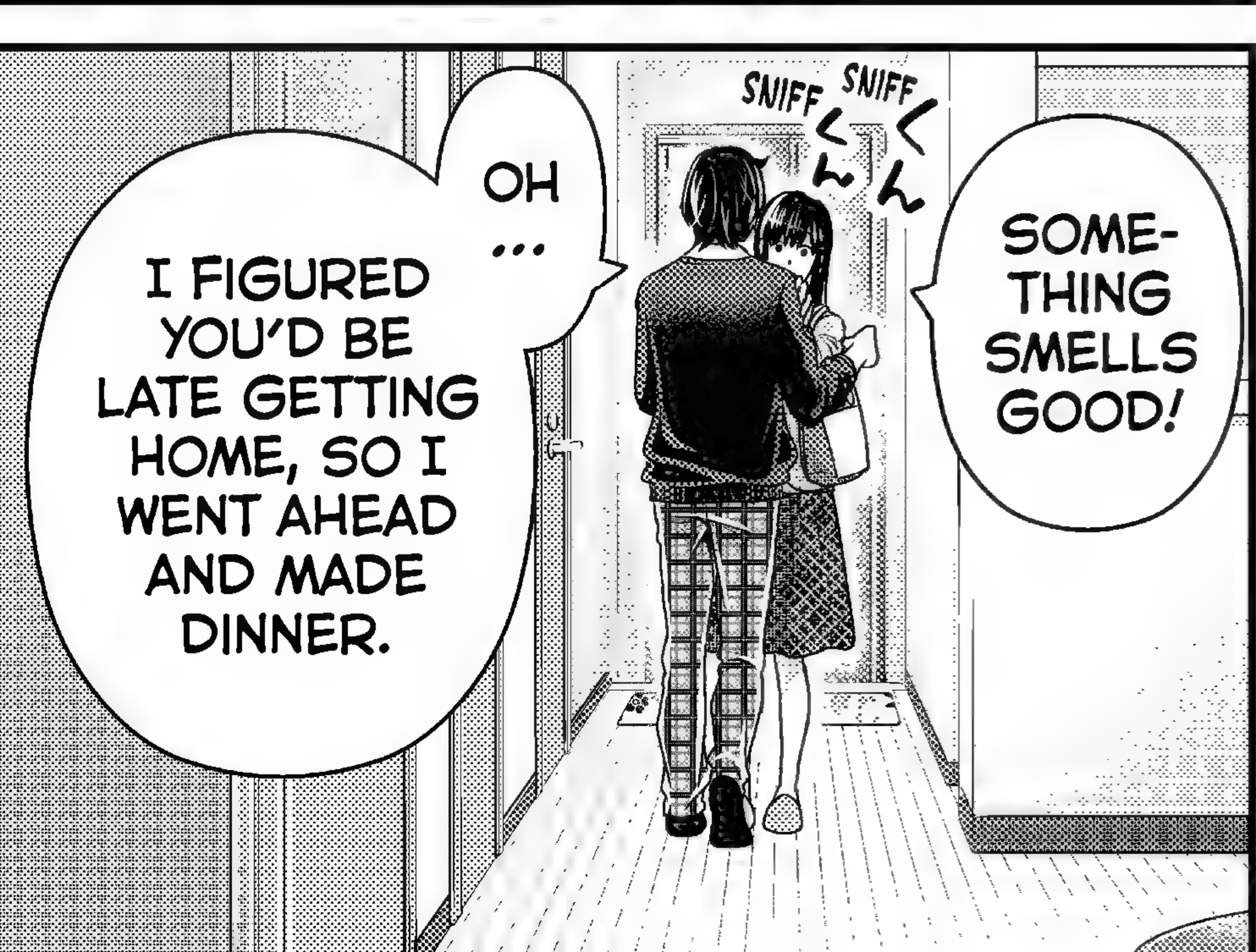
バ
ン
ン
ン

DO YOU
HAVE A
FEVER?

WHAT'S
WRONG,
NATSUO?
YOUR FACE
IS RED.

I-IT'S
NOTHING!
I'M
FINE!

DING
ン
ン





IT'S
NAPOLITAN.

I HOPE
YOU LIKE
IT.



UH...
SORRY.

BETWEEN HOW GOOD
IT IS, HOW HAPPY I AM,
AND HOW MUCH BETTER
AT COOKING YOU ARE
THAN ME, I JUST
CAN'T HELP IT...

AND
YOU
JUST
WHIPPED
IT UP
WITH
LEFT-
OVERS...



NOD
NOD
NOD

I'M
FLATTERED
AND ALL,
BUT YOU
DON'T HAVE
TO CRY
ABOUT IT
...

ER...
IS IT
THAT
GOOD?

THERE WAS
GREEN
PEPPER AND
SAUSAGE IN
THE FRIDGE,
SO...

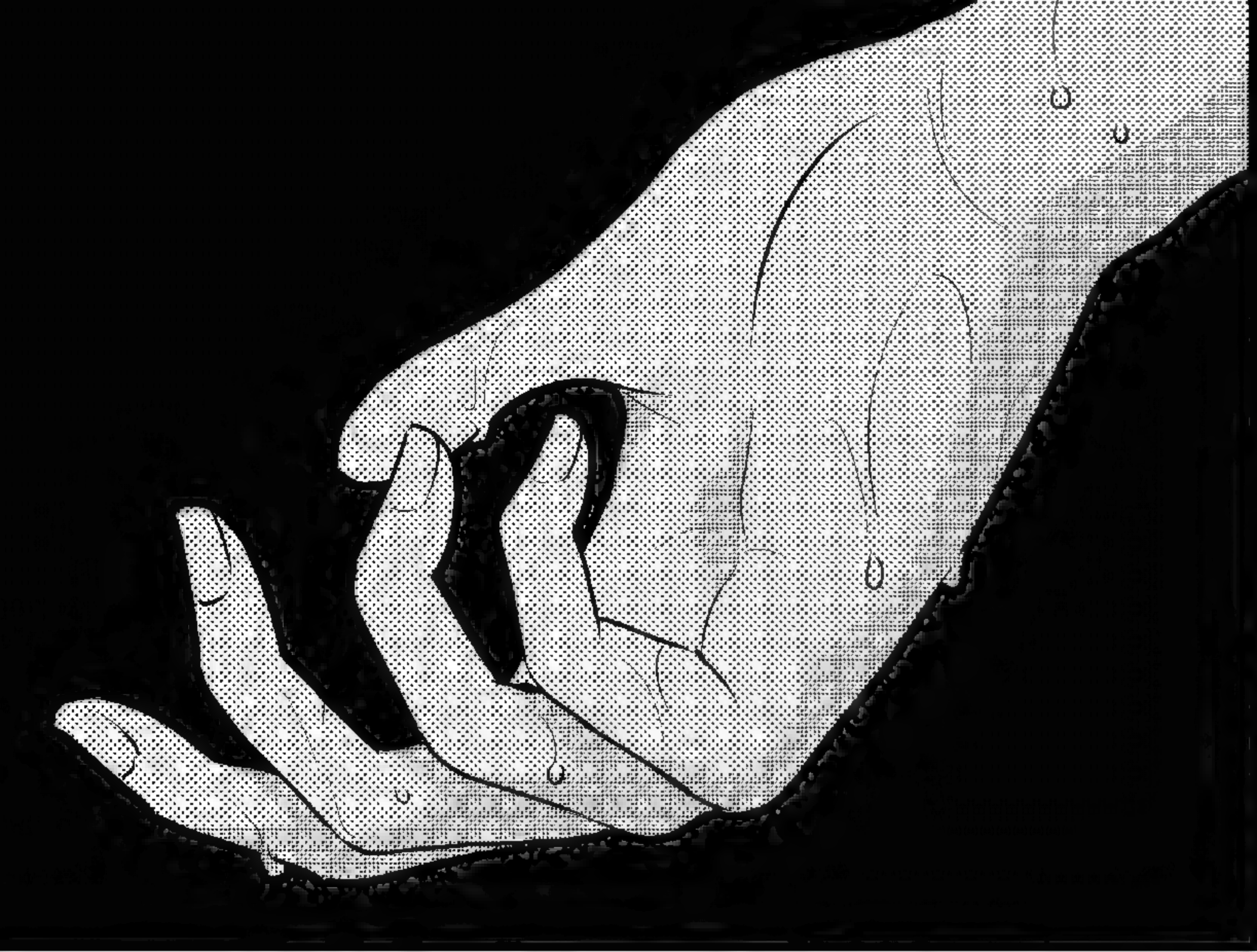


TO
SHOW MY
APPRECIATION...

...I'LL
CLEAN THE
DISHES...
AND YOU.



AFTER
YOU'RE
DONE
EATING,
W-WANNA
TAKE A
SHOWER
FIRST?





THAT'S
TOO
MUCH
...

HINA
...

WAIT.



NNG...

MM...

HAH...



FAH...

AH!

SERI-
OUSLY
...



A
A
A!



IT'S
OKAY.

THAT
WAS
THANKS
FOR
DINNER.

ちゅ
ちゅ
ちゅ
...



S-
SORRY.

I GOT
IT ON
YOUR
FACE
...

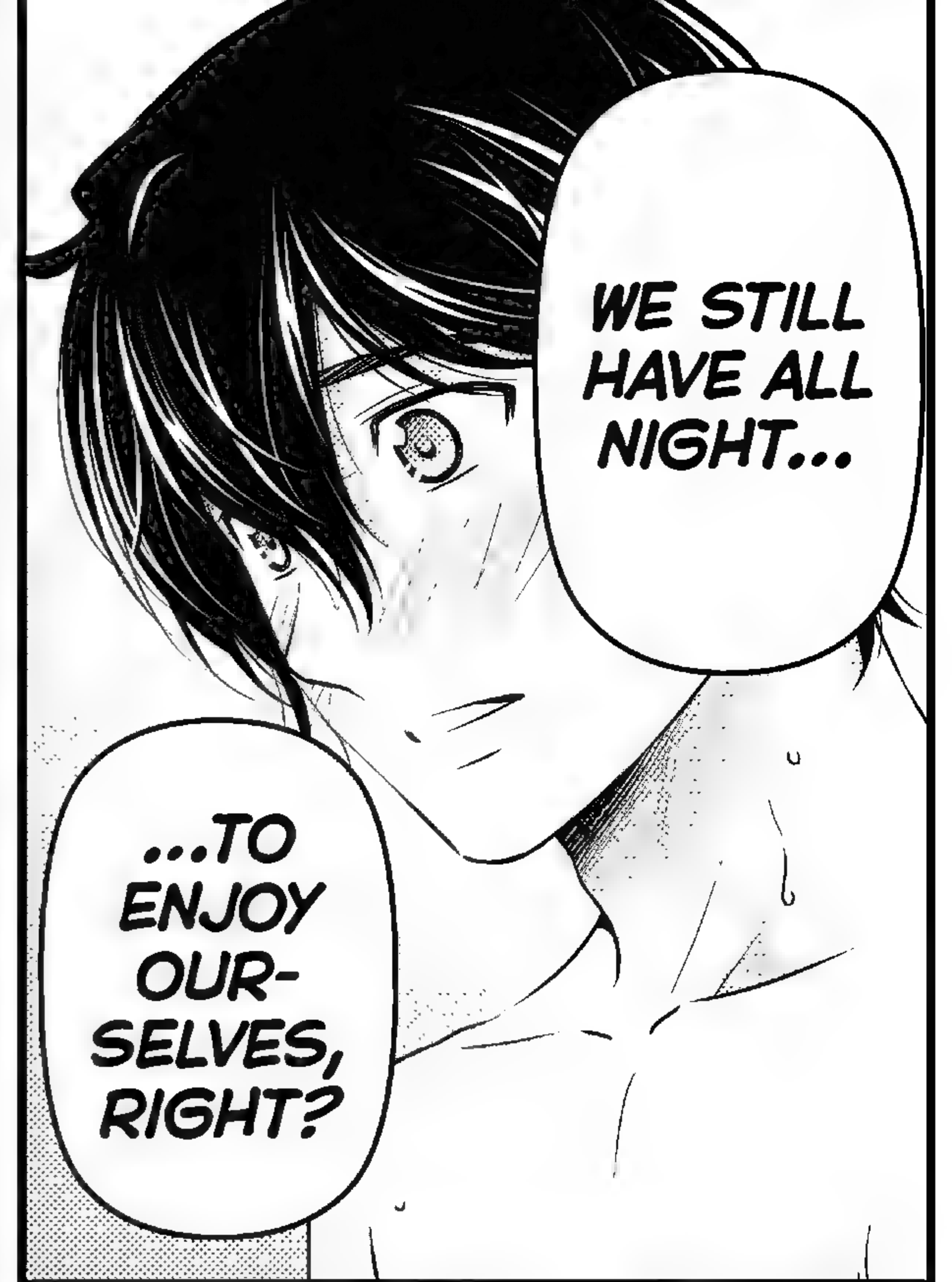


!



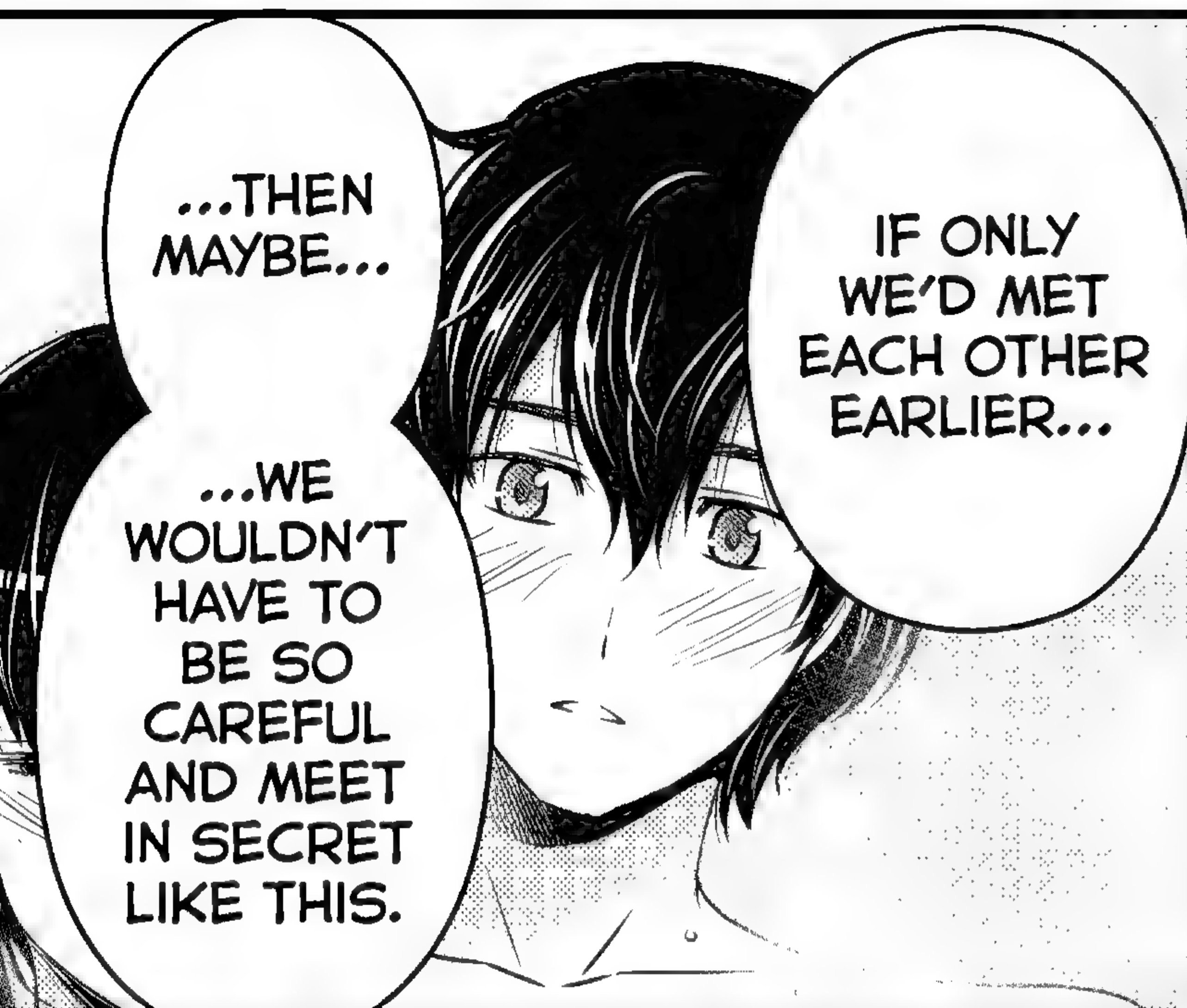
HOW LONG
DO YOU
THINK I'VE
BEEN
WAITING?

YEAH.



WE STILL
HAVE ALL
NIGHT...

...TO
ENJOY
OUR-
SELVES,
RIGHT?



...THEN
MAYBE...

IF ONLY
WE'D MET
EACH OTHER
EARLIER...

...WE
WOULDN'T
HAVE TO
BE SO
CAREFUL
AND MEET
IN SECRET
LIKE THIS.



...



AH!

MM...

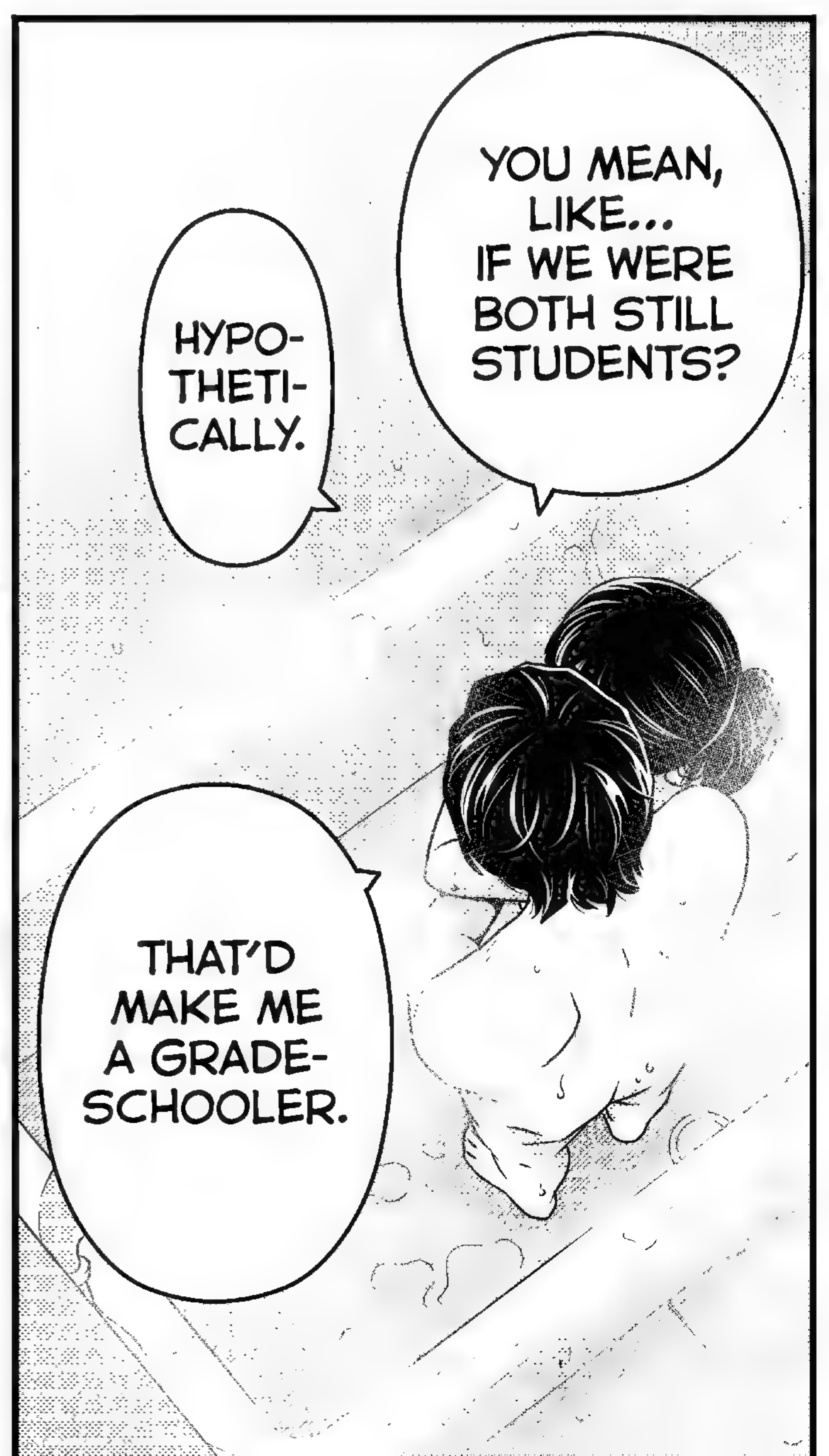
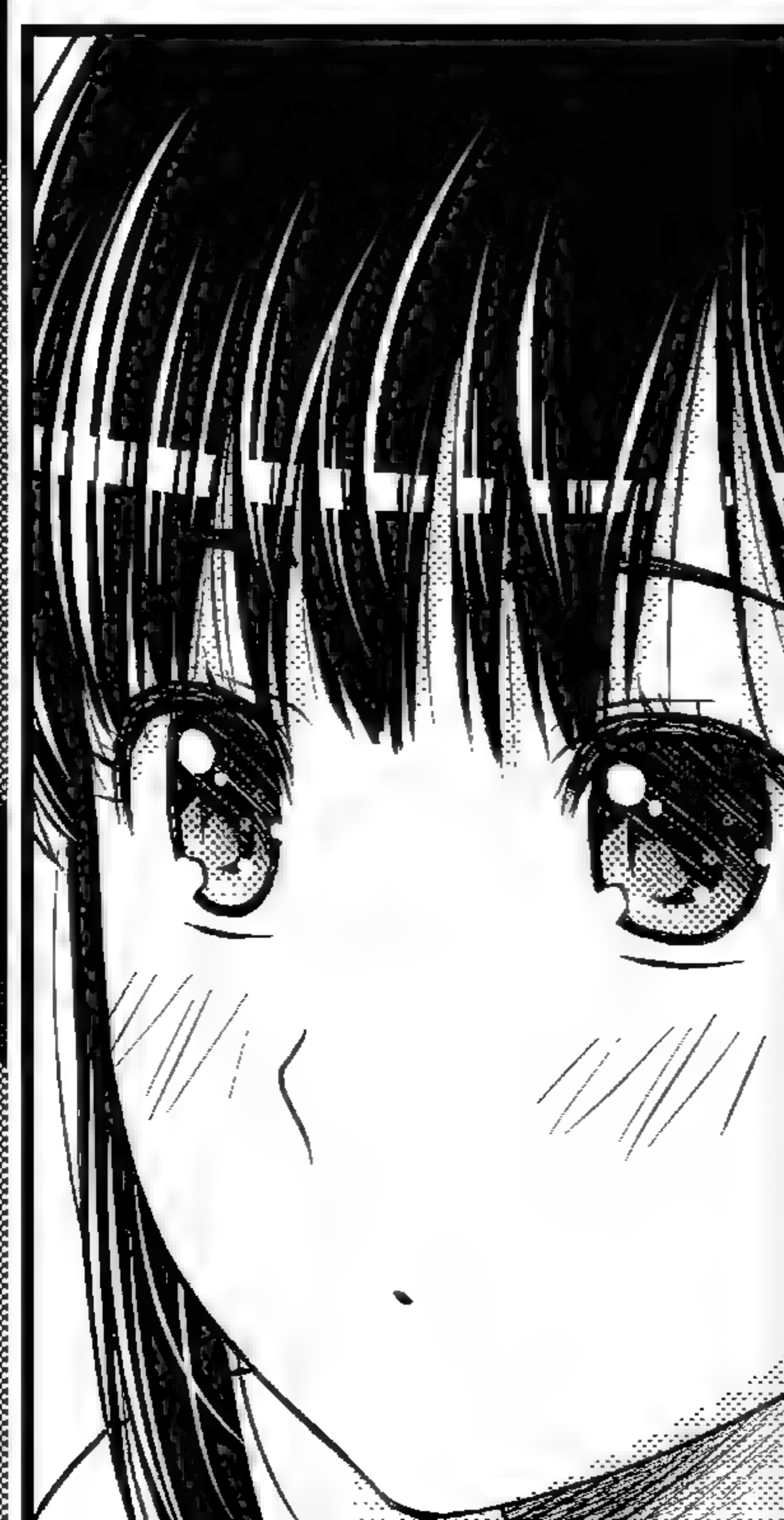


I WISH I
COULD'VE
SEEN YOU
IN YOUR
SCHOOL
UNIFORM.

BUT
YOU
KNOW,



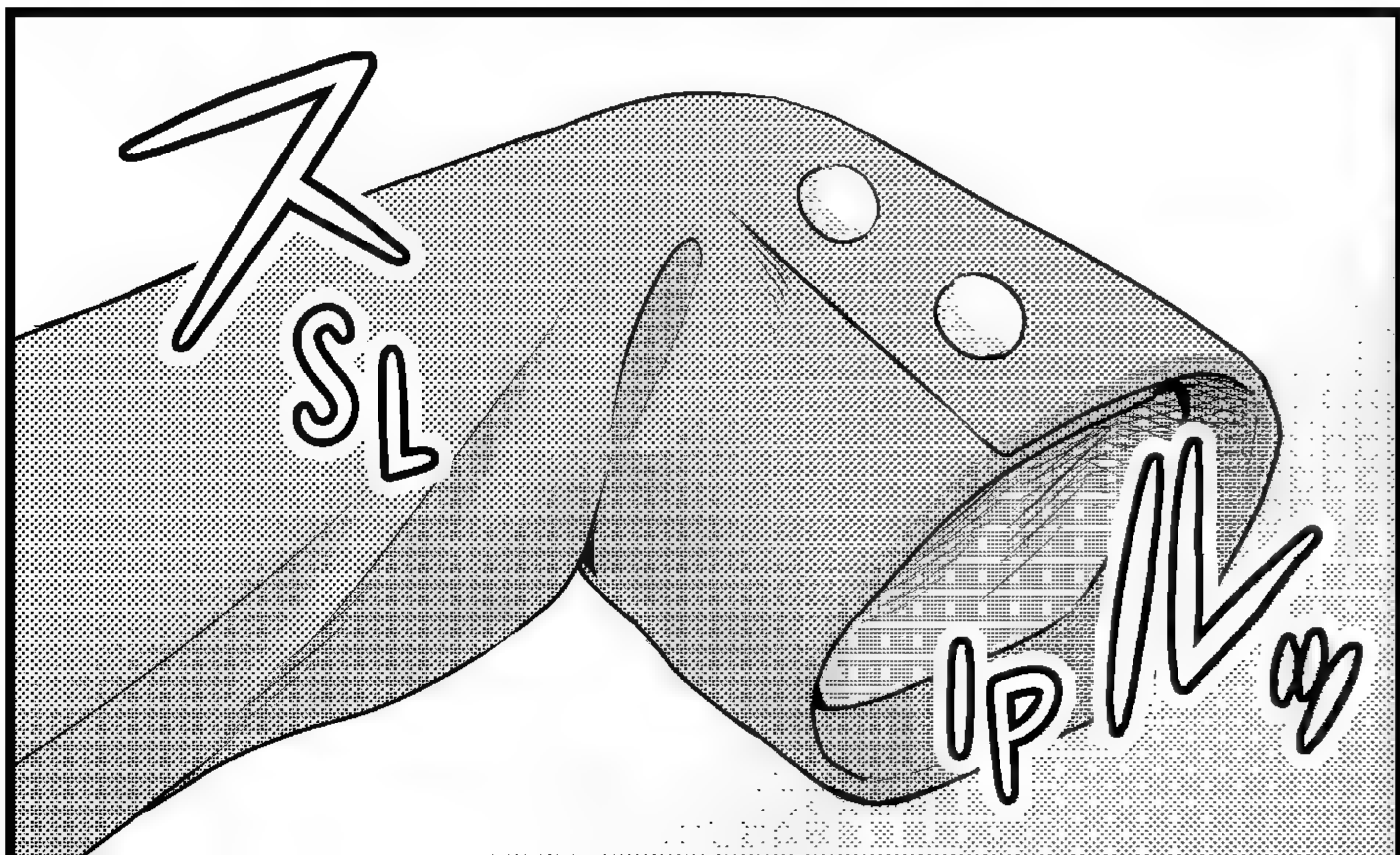
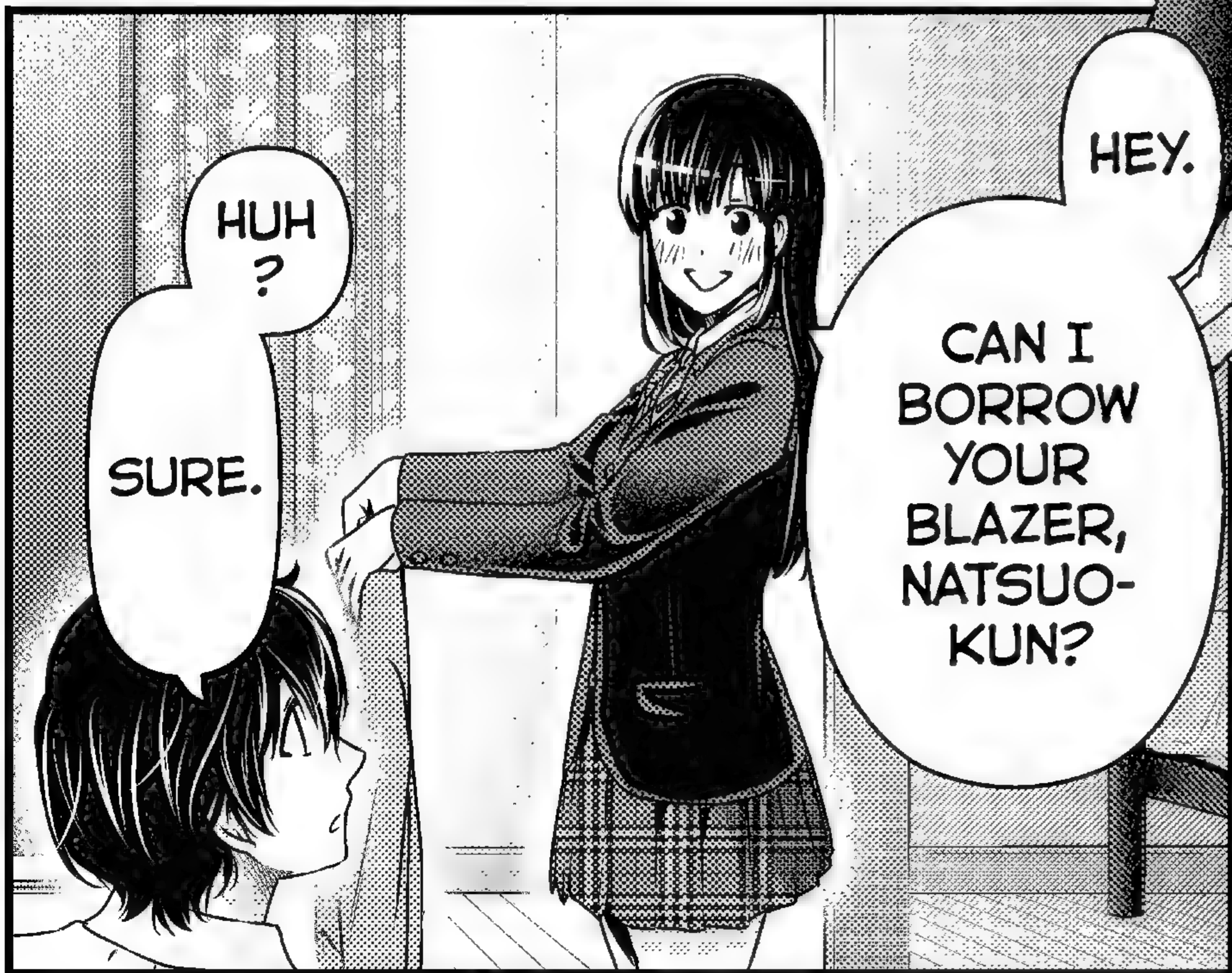
...I
STILL
HAVE
IT.



YOU MEAN,
LIKE...
IF WE WERE
BOTH STILL
STUDENTS?

HYPO-
THETI-
CALLY.

THAT'D
MAKE ME
A GRADE-
SCHOOLER.





WEARING
MY BOY-
FRIEND'S
GYM
CLOTHES,
UNIFORM,
STUFF LIKE
THAT...

I ALWAYS
WANTED TO
TRY THIS!



I FEEL
LIKE I'M
IN HIGH
SCHOOL
AGAIN!



WOW.

IT'S SO
BIG ON
ME.



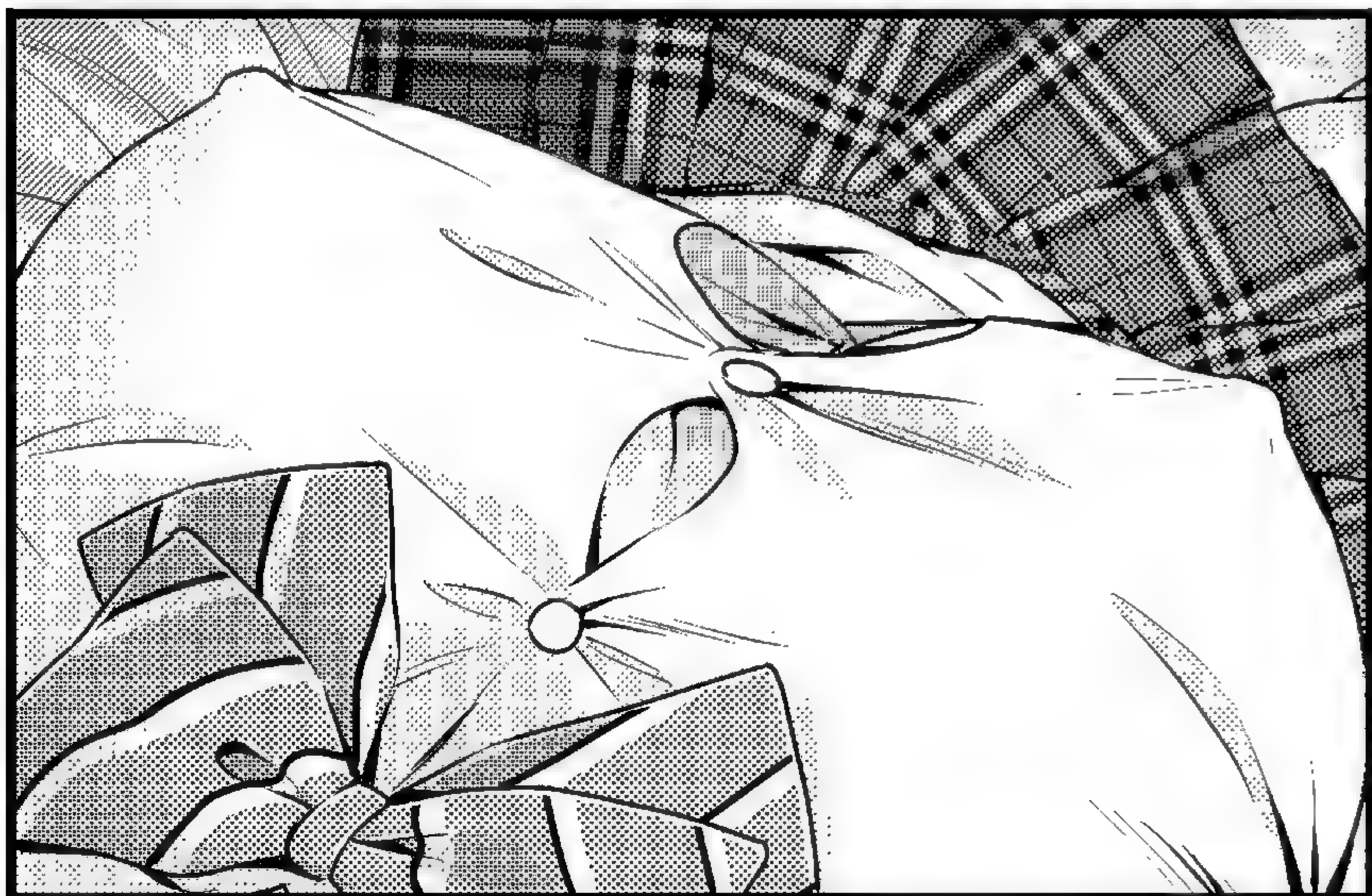
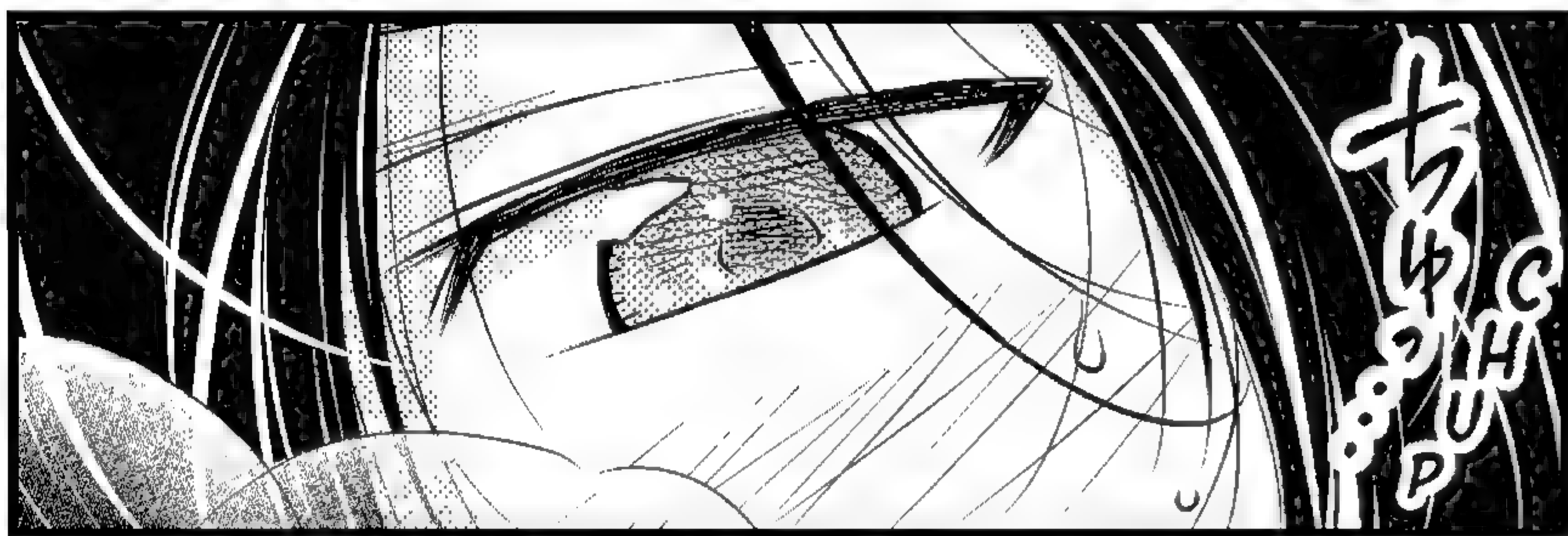
IT
SMELLS
LIKE
YOU.

MMM.



...YOU'RE
HOLDING
ME IN
YOUR
ARMS.

IT
FEELS
LIKE
...





IT'S ...

...EMBAR-RASSING HAVING JUST MY BREASTS EXPOSED.



CAN I TAKE YOUR SHIRT OFF?



LET ME SEE.

DON'T HIDE THEM.



THIS IS TOO MUCH.

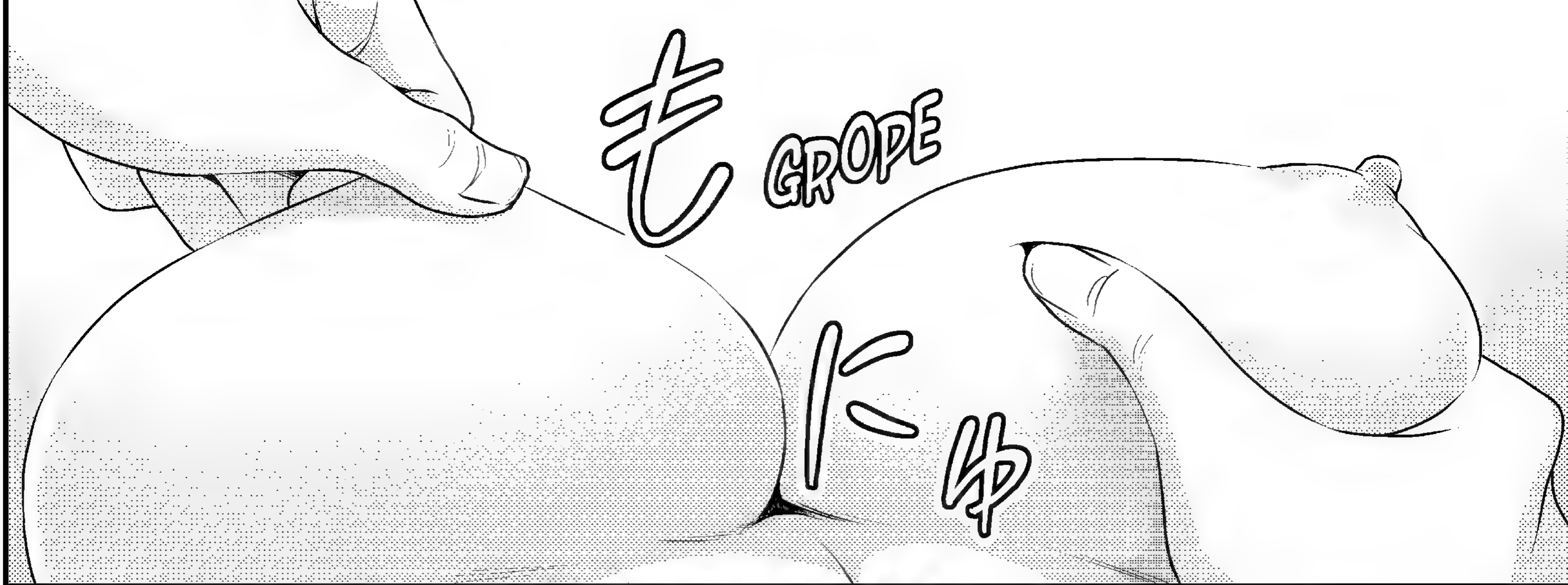
OH, MAN, HINA ...

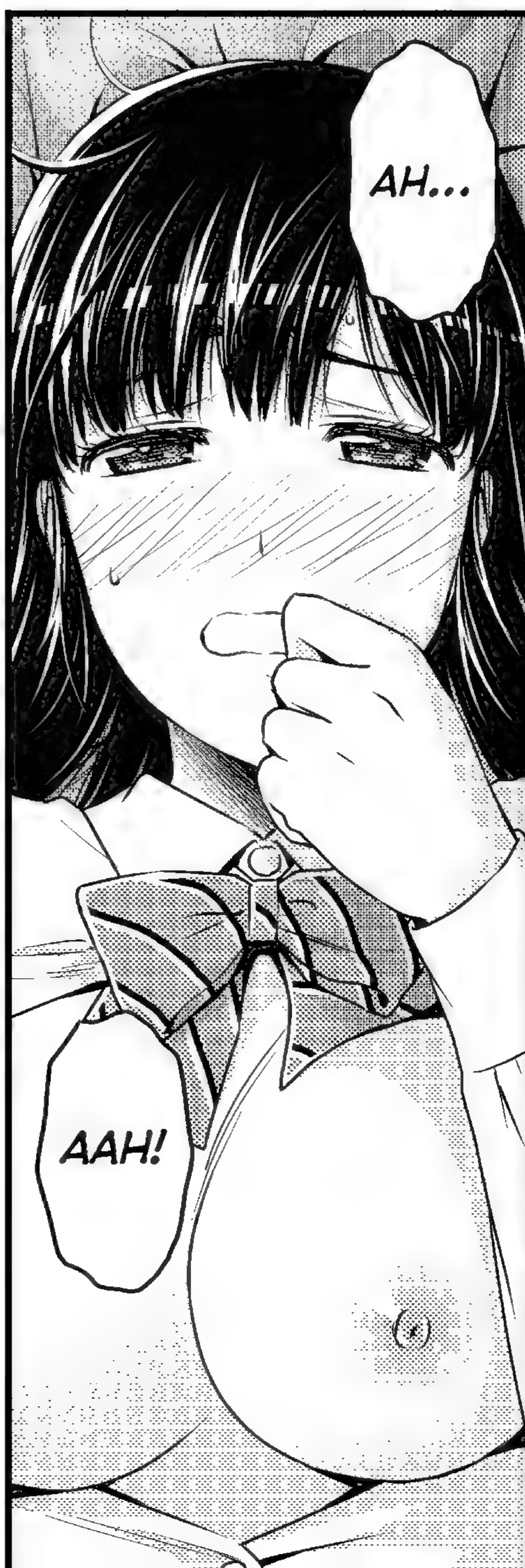


I'M REALLY TURNED ON.

YOU LOOK SO SEXY.











NATSUO X HINA

SWEET MEMORIES



END

Domestic Girlfriend 17

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

Domestic Girlfriend volume 17 copyright © 2018 Kei Sasuga
English translation copyright © 2018 Kei Sasuga

All rights reserved.

First published in Japan in 2018 by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.
Electronic Publishing rights for this English edition arranged through
Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or
by any means without written permission from the copyright holders.

English digital edition published by Kodansha Advanced Media, LLC,
San Francisco.

www.kodanshacomics.com

ISBN: 9781642122435

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

Translation by Adam Hirsch
Lettering by Daniel Park
Editing by Sarah Tilson
YKS Services LLC/SKY Japan, INC.